



WSPu3a Newsletter

March/April
2026



Woodhall Spa Community Police Office

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-Chairs' Corner

From Ced

On the second Monday of every month, we have a u3a committee meeting. As part of the proceedings, which is held in a light hearted but business-like manner, we hear a short report from the committee officers on their specific role e.g. Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Groups' Coordinator, Comms, Membership, Asset Manager and Speaker Finder. The idea is to share information throughout the group and make

decisions and plans accordingly for the coming months.

Our Constitution states the number of officers and members of the committee allowed, and also the maximum length of service for each role, up to three years – your choice. At the time of the AGM on the 7th May there will be vacancies for 3 new committee members..

Continued

Co-Chairs' Corner – Continued

Our u3a, like all others, has to have members who are willing and able to take a committee place. We have a great committee so please put your name forward and join us. We need you.

If you would like to be involved in keeping our u3a fresh and inviting for our members then you need to be nominated (form available on our website). This has to be submitted prior to

the AGM so members can vote you in (they will even if they haven't the foggiest idea who you are!).

Sorry to be a bit long winded but it is an important issue.

Ced Shurben – Co-chairperson

P.S. The AGM is scheduled to start at the earlier time of 2pm and due to the local elections, it will be held in St Peter's Hall.

Newsletter Editor

Could you be the next Editor of this wonderful Newsletter?

I have been the Editor for over four years now, so perhaps it's time for a change.

If you are interested you will need to be: conversent with Microsoft Word; have a good grasp on grammar; have an eagle-eye for style and detail.

I will be happy to introduce you to the format I've been using, and how to upload to the webpage, etc.

It is a prominent role an can take up to twenty hours of work each month, occasionally a little more, but it is rewarding to hear how much our member's enjoy reading it.

Interested? Send me an email (see below) or come and speak to me at the Monthly Meeting.

Tom Sefton – Editor

Did you spot the mistakes? Email me: newsletter@woodhallspa-u3a.org.uk

Membership

At the time of writing this a large proportion of you have renewed your subs for 2026/27.

At the end of April we will be printing new 'Yellow' membership cards for those who have paid and these will be available to collect at the A.G.M. on 7th May.

Jan Keable – Membership Secretary.

Monthly Meetings

Apr 2nd

2:30pm to 4pm
Coronation Hall

Ten Pound Poms to Australia

Rosanna McGlone:

May 7th

2:00pm to 4pm
St. Peter's Hall

AGM and u3a Play Group entertains us yet again!

Please note earlier time and different venue.

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](#)

Woodhall Spa u3a AGM

Notice is hereby given that the AGM of Woodhall Spa u3a
will be held on:

Thursday 7th May 2026 at 14:00
St Peter's Hall, Woodhall Spa

If you have an interest in joining the committee or wish to nominate someone, nominations are to be submitted by 6th April 2026 to the Secretary, Colin Talbot at: secretary@woodhallspa-u3a.org.uk or 10 Oaklands Park, Horncastle Road, Woodhall Spa, LN10 6UU

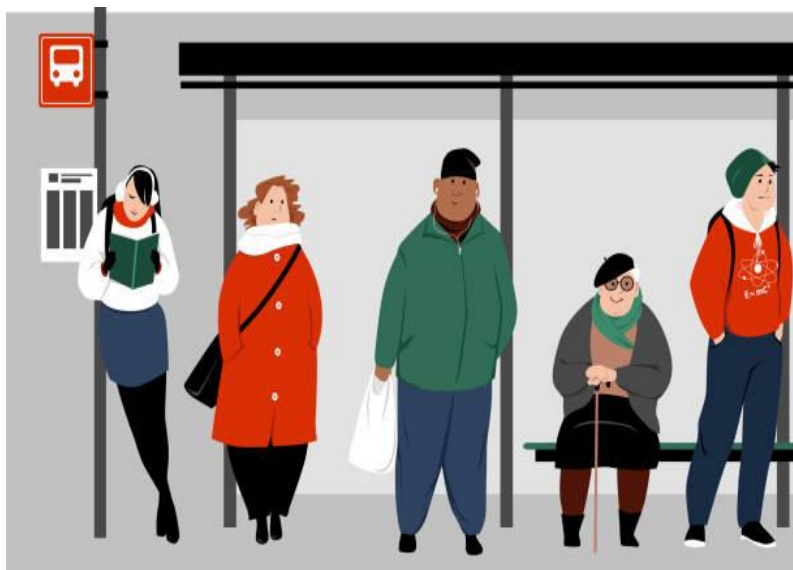
Members are invited to submit agenda items by 6th April 2026 to the Secretary, Colin Talbot at secretary@woodhallspa-u3a.org.uk
No business will be accepted after this date.

To enable you to vote, please ensure that you have renewed your membership for 2026/27 before the AGM on 7th May 2026.

The Playreading Group present:

"BUS STOP" by Rae Shirley

(with kind permission from [Concord Theatricals](#))



A staged playreading for you all to enjoy after the AGM on 7th May 2026 at St. Peters Church Hall, Woodhall Spa (2pm)

Please come and support us

Groups News

*****NEW IDEAS FOR APRIL*****

GARDENING

CREATIVE WRITING

SHORT WALKS

TABLE GAMES

If you are interested in any of these, please let me know by either filling in a form at the monthly meeting or sending an email on groups@woodhallspa-u3a.org.uk

****Enough interest = new group = new challenges****

Table Tennis

This group, which plays on Tuesday afternoons, is a joint venture between Woodhall and Horncastle u3as with Horncastle being responsible for admin.

At the moment, the group is full.

If you would like to join the waiting list, please contact Kevin Hogan on 07553602257

(It is possible to play on Mondays mornings 10 – 12 (Except 2nd Monday) and Thursday evenings 7 – 9 but these sessions are NOT linked to the u3a – More details from Kevin.)

“You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream” – C.S.Lewis

Joan Willard – Group Co-ordinator

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](#)

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:

Our own WSPu3a website	Woodhall Spa u3a website
u3a – Online Learning Events	u3a Online Learning
<p>u3a Radio Podcast</p> <p><i>We meet Annie Elliott, author of a compelling new book exploring the life of Catherine Dickens and the difficult reality of her marriage to Charles Dickens – shining a light on the often-overlooked story of the famous novelist’s wife. We also talk to Sally Lang, whose poetry collection Lines from an Ordinary Life captures the beauty, humour and quiet reflections found in everyday moments. And we hear from Olympic discus champion Bill Tancred, who shares his passion for encouraging older people to stay active and enjoy the benefits of fitness at any age.</i></p>	<p>u3a Radio March</p> 
<p>Interest Groups Online</p> <p><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>	Click here

Group Noticeboard

Outings

July Outing

We will be announcing a new outing for July and taking bookings at the April monthly meeting.

Outings Group Committee.

Find out more:

You can use this link to find more details on upcoming trips:

[Outings Web Page](#)

Croquet

Time once again to dust off your mallets ready for starting another season's Croquet.

The Group Leader would like to extend an invitation to anyone remotely interested in joining our regular Tuesday morning group who assemble in Jubilee Park at around 10.00 am.

The group has two qualified coaches to welcome any new u3a wannabes who would like to try their hand at swinging a mallet to strike a ball.

Our game of Golf Croquet is a relaxing and enjoyable couple of hours walking on manicured lawns amongst the rose gardens and flower beds in our park.

What could be better to raise the spirits if your feeling a little jaded? Come along and try, not only the benefits already mentioned but it would stimulate your brain power to try and master an age old game played on the lawns of Manor Houses with ladies in crinoline dresses and gentlemen in smart tailored suits and top hats.

Our group members are not like minded as those olden days of dress attire. The only request we have is that flat-soled, soft shoes are worn to protect the lawn's surface.

You've now pictured the scene, so now come and join a group – I'm sure you will enjoy it.

I look forward to seeing some new members for our 2026 season

Bob Potter – Group Leader and Coach

Find out more:

[Croquet Group webpage](#)

Walking Cricket

The new Walking Cricket group meets for the first time on Tuesday, April 14th at 10am at Jubilee Park.

If you want to sign up or find out more, please contact me by email (below) or via Beacon, or contact Joan, our Groups Coordinator.

See you there!

John Hart – Group Leader

Email: j.s.hart@sky.com

A short note from a new member

At the latest Welcome to New Members coffee morning I introduced myself as having worked for the University of Cambridge when the u3a was founded. Joan Willard said she thought that perhaps I might put together something for the Newsletter.

I did not have anything to do with the founding although I knew people involved as I worked for the University Department of Psychiatry as Personal Secretary for the first ever Professor of Psychiatry, Professor Sir Martin Roth, a world expert in ageing of the brain and dementia. There was cross fertilization of ideas with consultants like Dr Nick Coni who worked directly with the aged. All were fascinated by the idea that somehow people who were of a certain age could have better function if they kept their minds active, but how to do this?

Their mantra was "Use it or lose it" and they believed that some organisation was needed that might help arrest or delay the descent down the slippery slope of certain cognitive decline.

As you will see from the brilliant notes of Dr Nick Coni (see [Find Out More](#), below) on the foundation and development of Cambridge u3a, this is where the French come in.

Thanks to friends in Cambridge who are still in contact with people originally involved.

Typically Dr Coni omitted to say that he received an OBE For Services to Education for the Elderly in 2020.

Judith Goddard

Find Out More:

To Read Dr Coni's History of the u3a in Cambridge, [follow this link to the Addendum](#)

Around the Groups in 30 days

Visiting Churches

St Denys Church Sleaford

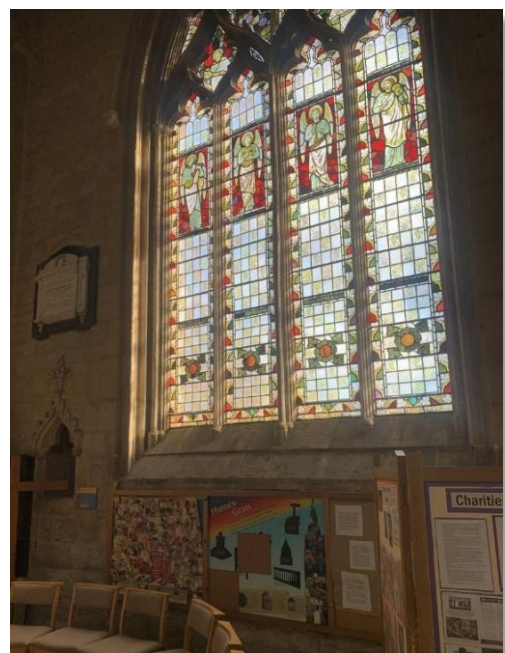
On Tuesday 10th March eleven of us met at St Denys Church Sleaford. We were met by Richard Clash one of the church wardens.

A church has stood there from 1180.

We all admired the wonderful stained glass windows.

The Angel and Orange was produced by William Morris & Co.

The monument to Sir Edward Carre was damaged during the Civil War; Cromwell's men responsible for removing the limbs?



Continued

St Denys Church - Continued

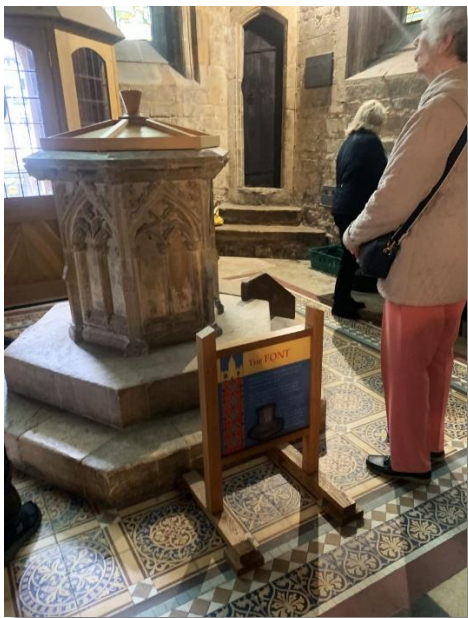


The Chancel was built in 1430 .
The East Window is in a cross design.
The choir stalls and organ are from 1890.
The High Alter rails were designed by Christopher Wren



Medieval Gravestones are on the floor. A coffin lid belongs to Yvette of Rauceby
The Lady's Chapel was added in 1380.

The Octagonal Font dates to the 14c:



The original vicarage, part Elizabethan and Victorian, is now a private dwelling



A church I would recommend to visit. It is open everyday from 9am to 3pm

Kathie Craigs – Group Leader

Find out more:

[Visiting Churches Group webpage](#)

Bird Watching and Wildlife

Frampton

There was a good turnout of eight participants who assembled in the car park at 10 a.m. on a damp, overcast, misty morning. The light was poor and the visibility as bad.

However, our hopes were high, as they always are at Frampton. We last visited the Reserve in August when there was scarcely any water at all but on this occasion it certainly merited the description of Wetland Reserve. Bird numbers were lower than expected but the overall species tally of thirtysix in a two hour period was quite respectable, despite the absence of many common ones.

Two of the goose species attracted the keenest attention of visiting birders; a flock of Russian white-fronted geese and a small party of Tundra bean geese, which were mingled with the usual wintering pink footed geese in a field next to the Reserve entrance. We were able to identify them with the aid of telescopes. They

were relatively close but almost invisible to the naked eye in the unhelpful conditions.

A few species defied the conditions with their songs, the imperative to defend a territory and attract a partner stimulated by the high ambient temperature and lengthening days. Cetti's warbler, chaffinch, dunnock and reed bunting were not enough to qualify as a chorus but cheered the dismal day.

It was expected that the weather would worsen, and it did, starting to rain prior to our grateful retreat to the cafe for lunch and warmth. Conversation with John Badley, the Reserve manager, revealed that approximately 5000 golden plover were present, almost certainly the distant flock seen by us several times when flushed by a presumed raptor but too far away in the murk to be positively identified.

Below is the species tally in alphabetical order:

<i>Avocet</i>	<i>Bean Goose</i>	<i>Black-headed gull</i>
<i>Black-tailed godwit</i>	<i>Blue tit</i>	<i>Brent goose</i>
<i>Canada goose</i>	<i>Cetti's warbler</i>	<i>Chaffinch</i>
<i>Curlew</i>	<i>Dunlin</i>	<i>Dunnock</i>
<i>Gadwall</i>	<i>Goldeneye</i>	<i>Goldfinch</i>
<i>Great egret</i>	<i>Greylag goose</i>	<i>Herring gull</i>
<i>Lapwing</i>	<i>Mallard</i>	<i>Moorhen</i>
<i>Mute Swan</i>	<i>Oystercatcher</i>	<i>Pink-footed goose</i>
<i>Pintail</i>	<i>Redshank</i>	<i>Reed bunting</i>
<i>Robin</i>	<i>Shelduck</i>	<i>Shoveler</i>
<i>Skylark</i>	<i>Snipe</i>	<i>Teal</i>
<i>Tufted duck</i>	<i>White-fronted goose</i>	<i>Wigeon</i>

(apologies to everyone for any omissions)

John Watt

Find out more:

[Bird Watching and Wildlife Group webpage](#)

5 Mile Walking

Bag Enderby/Stainsby/Somersby/Brinkhill return

On Thursday 12th March, twentytwo stalwarts battled against a gale force wind.

Starting at the Bag Enderby church car park, we walked in a westerly direction to Stainsby House Farm along tracks and headlands.



From the farm we followed the private road turning right into a lane with varying undulations. Turning right again into Bridge Road, crossing the bridge over The River Lymn, reportedly where Tennyson, Queen Victoria's poet Laureate was inspired to write his poem 'The Brook'.

Uphill to Somersby we passed his birthplace and also the castle-like Somersby Grange, built in 1722.



We then had a welcome refreshment break from the weather in St Margaret's church.

On leaving Somersby in a northerly direction, we climbed Warden Hill to the farm and onto Fox Covert on limestone tracks. We turned right downhill past Snake Holt and onto Brinkhill Lane before returning to the village of Bag Enderby.

The friendly like-minded group, although slightly battered, were fortunate to miss the predicted rain and a few returned to the Melrose cafe.

Barbara & Richard Leatherland

Find out more:

[5 Mile Walking Group webpage](#)

Home Computing for Fun

Movies and Video Online

For many, we often hear the statement: "...there's nothing on TV worth watching".

Now is your opportunity to explore the internet for alternative TV channels and old movies, both free and legal.

Below are the channels available in the UK, either online or via YouTube:

Movies and video online:

These platforms aggregate channels and on-demand content from various providers, all streamed over the internet.

BBC channels (<http://bbc.co.uk/iplayer>):

BBC One, BBC Two, BBC Three, BBC Four, BBC News, BBC Parliament, CBBC, CBeebies

ITV channels (<http://itv.com/watch/user/signin>):

ITV1, ITV2, ITV3, ITV4, ITVBe, ITV Quiz

Channel 4 channels

(<http://channel4.com/sign-in-or-register>):

Channel 4, E4, Film4, More4, 4seven, 4Reality, 4Homes, 4Life

Channel 5 channels (<http://channel5.com>):

5, 5STAR, 5ACTION, 5USA, 5SELECT

Tubi (<http://tubitv.com/en-gb/movies>):

A free, ad-supported service with a large library of movies and TV shows. It's available on the web and via apps.

Plex (<http://watch.plex.tv/en-GB>):

Known for organising personal media, Plex also offers a selection of free on-demand movies and live TV channels with adverts.

The Internet Archive (<http://archive.org/details/moviesandfilms?tab=collection>):

A digital library featuring a massive collection of public domain films, from classic cinema to obscure titles, viewable directly on its website.

Pluto TV (<http://pluto.tv>)

This free ad-supported streaming service (FAST) offers over 150 live channels and thousands of on-demand movies and shows. It's owned by *Paramount* and available on the web, mobile apps, and streaming devices.

Content includes: Themed channels for movies (action, sci-fi, westerns), reality TV (Hell's Kitchen, Geordie Shore, Catfish), classic sitcoms, news, sports, and kids' TV. You can find shows like NCIS, CSI, Skins, and films like The Godfather and the Indiana Jones franchise. No registration is required.

Other channels:

Quest, Really, U&Dave, U&Drama, U&W, U&Yesterday, GREAT! channels, Talking Pictures TV, True Crime, Legend, PBS America, Sky Mix, Sky Arts, and many more

News channels:

Sky News, GB News

Kids channels:

POP, Tiny POP, Ketchup TV

Continued

Movies and Videos online – Continued

YouTube Channels That Offer A Wide Range Of Free And Legal Movies

The best choice for you will depend on whether you're looking for mainstream hits, classic cinema, indie films, or specific genres. Here are the top channels with the widest selections, categorised by their strengths.

FilmRise Movies (<http://filmrise.com>):

Operated by a major film and TV studio, this channel is arguably one of the best for a wide variety. It features nearly 400 movies, including acclaimed titles like *The Iceman* and *The Illusionist*, alongside action films starring Jean-Claude Van Damme and Nicolas Cage.

PopcornFlix (<http://popcornflix.com>):

With over 3 million subscribers, this is a very popular and consistently updated channel. They upload new movies several times a week, covering everything from action, comedy, and horror to drama, sci-fi, and documentaries.

Movie Central / Horror Central (<http://youtube.com/@MovieCentral>):

This is a major network that offers a huge selection. The main channel, Movie Central, features a broad mix of genres, including monster movies, rom-coms, sci-fi, westerns, and B-movies from studios like The Asylum. For horror fans, their dedicated spin-off, Horror Central, is a one-stop destination for sub-genres like slasher, psychological, and monster horror.

PizzaFlix (<http://youtube.com/user/PizzaFlix/videos>):

Created by film industry veterans, this is the ultimate destination for classic film lovers. They control a large library of broadcast-quality films and digitally remaster classic Hollywood movies, adding new mainstream classics every Monday and obscure B-movies every Friday.

Shout! Studios (<http://youtube.com/@ShoutStudios/videos>):

Perfect for a nostalgic trip, this channel focuses on movies and TV classics from the 80s and 90s, and even features 24/7 live streams of genre collections.

Standart Documentaries (http://youtube.com/results?search_query=Standart+Documentaries):

A go-to channel for documentary enthusiasts, featuring fascinating non-fiction films.

DUST (<http://youtube.com/@watchdust/videos>):

is a curated short film channel on YouTube that features narrative science fiction stories. They have a vibrant community of storytellers working together to present thought-provoking content.

The TED Talks channel (http://youtube.com/results?search_query=TED+Talks):

showcases the best talks and performances from leading thinkers and doers around the world. TED seeks talks on Technology, Entertainment, and Design, as well as science, business, global issues, and the arts, all under 18 minutes.

MOVIEDOME (<http://youtube.com/@moviedomeuk/videos>):

offers free and legal streaming of movies. Releasing two films a week, it provides a wide selection of titles, including action, thriller, drama, comedy, family, war, and science fiction.

4,000 of the best free movies on YouTube, legally available with ads. Please note that there are territorial restrictions, so some titles may not be accessible outside the USA.

Also, in YouTube type: *Top Free Full Length TV Movies* and *Top Free Full-Length Nineties Movies*

I hope this guide helps you find your next favourite movie!

Paul Membrey – Assisted by AI

Find out more:

[Home Computing for Fun Group webpage](#)

Wild Flowers

Gosling Corner Wood

After discounting Tattershall Carrs we decided instead to go to Gosling Corner Wood near Langton by Wragby instead . It is a 10 hectare remnant of the Langton oak/lime wood which was felled in the 1850s and 1870s and has one of the richest flora for woodland in the County.



On the hunt

We identified *Barren Strawberry* (*Potentilla sterilis*) which is a plant I haven't recognised before. It differs from wild strawberry by having smaller white flowers and pale green-blue leaves and flowering as early as March.

The displays of Primroses have increased since our last visit and clumps have spread to about 25 to 30 metres across. They were a delight in the afternoon spring sunlight throughout the woodland.



Primroses

White Blackthorn blossom is scattered along the hedges There were a whole host of willows which we left for another time. More research is needed , my book lists at least seven varieties



Celandine

All over the wood were bluebells and the smell of wild garlic, though we only found one single bluebell flower. Lord's and Lady's or Cuckoo Pint was another plant without a flower. It is known by a host of local names which have become more polite and less ribald over time



Wood Anemone

Here is the list of some of the plants we saw:

- Barren Strawberry*
- Celandine*
- Dogs Mercury*
- Primrose*
- Wood Sage*

- Blackthorn*
- Cuckoo Pint*
- Greater Stitchwort*
- Wild Garlic*
- Yellow Archangel*

- Bluebell*
- Dog Violets*
- Hairy Bittercress*
- Wood Anemone*

Malcolm Capps – Group Leader

Find out more:

[Wild Flowers Group webpage](#)

Art

March Gallery - On the themes of Spring and Easter



Irene Derwent - Group Leader

Find out more:

[Art Group webpage](#)

Woodhall Wanderers

Welbourn

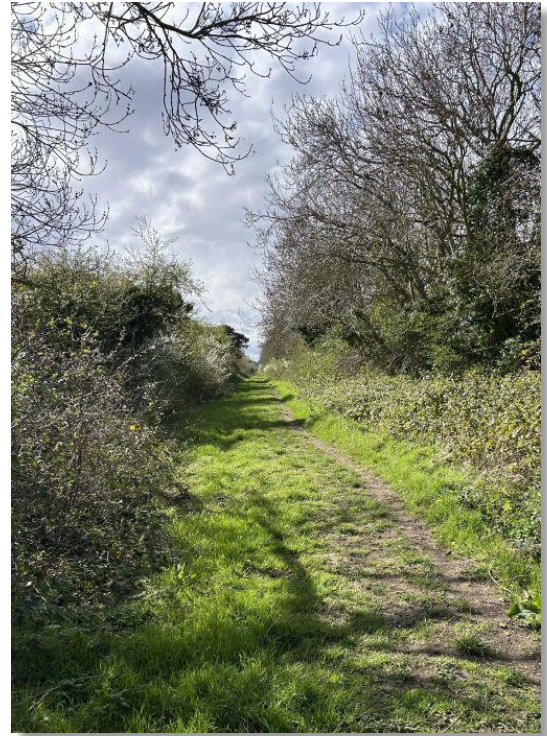
A select group of five Woodhall Wanderers set out from the pretty village of Welbourn for our March walk. Our route took us across fields, along part of an old railway line, up a steep track to walk along a ridge and back down into the village.

It is easy to miss Welbourn village as it lies away from the main road with little through traffic. However, it is a place with an interesting history. In the centre of the village is the site of a Norman Ringwork castle, whose moat can be clearly seen.



Welbourn's other claim to fame is as the birthplace of Sir William Robertson, after whom the local secondary school is named. He was born into a poor family in 1860 and joined the army as a Private in 1877. He is famous for being the only British soldier to have risen right through the ranks, from Private to Field Marshal, during the course of a long career which included serving in WW1. Strong winds and showers were forecast for our walk, but although the gusts of wind were strong, the weather stayed dry and we enjoyed the far-reaching views from the top of the ridge.

Maureen Moscrop



At one time, the village lay on the route of an 18 mile long railway line, which ran from Honington near Grantham to Lincoln. The line closed in 1965 but part of it is still accessible to walkers and it provides a useful corridor for wildlife.



Find out more:

[Woodhall Wanderers Group webpage](#)

Poetry

Houses/Homes

We were back in the Parish Rooms for our meeting. This month's theme was 'Houses/Homes'. We heard contributions from five members ranging from a house on the moon to childhood or grandparent or other familial homes. We had poems and a discussion about the meaning of 'home' in other cultures and the social status given to the location of a house depending on which side of the tracks it stands. Another contribution was arriving home by air describing the beauty experienced from such a bird's eye view.

We read and discussed poems by John Betjeman, Christina Rossetti, Ted Hughes and John Masefield. We all felt it had been a very interesting and thought provoking session..

Returning Home

*Day is breaking as we begin
to make the descent,
gauzy sun lighting
buffs and moss greens
of the South Downs,
pockets of mist hugging
each dip and fold.*

*The plane begins to bank,
circle and sink lower.
I can now see the Thames –
a sinuous eel – slipping
through the city.*

*We drop lower and lower.
Twin lines of tapering lights
rise up, keep rising – wide arms
embracing us home.*

© Marion Ashton 2026

Granny's Home

*Granny's Home is where I went on Friday,
The best day of my week,
A hot lunch, cup of tea, loving chat and up the hill for Bridie,
And more Sums.*

*A small terrace, with black lead range, full of memory,
8 children had lived there and a Grandad,
But now just her and the cat,
But how we could chat.*

*There were parties, laughter and joy,
Auntie Chrissie on the Piano, and singing,
Cousins full of fun . Sweet cakes and Tea.*

*A gas light with Mantle and Chains,
A rag rug , wooden rocking chair,
A Glorious Sideboard full of china, silver,
And endless cups and saucers.*

*Neighbours popped in,
Front Steps were white edged,
And proper standards were kept.*

*There it is in my memory still,
I can visit and see her.
Granny Ruth with her sweet face,
And Silver plaited Hair*

© Irene Derwent 2026

Nancy Rynne – Group Co-Leader

Read More:

Use this link to see what else the group has written this month:

[March Houses/Homes](#)

Outings

A Day Trip to the Theatre: Miss Saigon

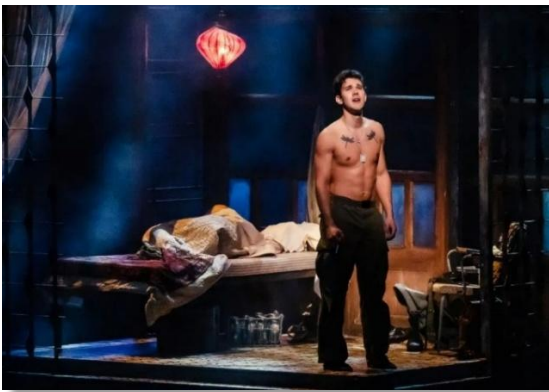
On leaving the house, we were met with a chilly breeze, with showers forecast for later. Not discouraged, we met familiar and new faces at the Stixwoud Road pickup point. Dickinson's coach arrived, and we departed on time. *(I always use my phone's GPS and was disappointed that the driver took the same old route, which added 20 minutes to our journey. Maybe next time.)*

On arrival at the theatre, we all dispersed for lunch at various venues. For us, we went with friends to trusty John Lewis, just five minutes away, for coffee, a bit of shopping, and then lunch.

The Theatre Royal in Nottingham is a historic Grade II listed venue in the city centre, opened in 1865 and transformed by renowned architect Frank Matcham in 1897. It features a 1,107-seat, four-level auditorium (stalls, dress circle, upper circle, balcony) and serves as a premier venue for touring West End musicals, opera, ballet, and pantomime.

SPOILERS ALERT

However, today was to be a memorable day to see the acclaimed musical ['Miss Saigon'](#), a powerful and tragic story of love and loss. This epic musical is a modern adaptation of Puccini's classic opera 'Madame Butterfly', set against the backdrop of the Vietnam War in the 1970s. The story centres on Kim, a young Vietnamese orphan of just 17, who works in a Saigon bar and falls in love with Chris, an American GI.



[Theatre Royal](#)

Their whirlwind romance is shattered during the dramatic fall of Saigon, cruelly tearing them apart as Chris is forced to evacuate.

The musical follows their heartbreaking journey over the next three years. Kim survives in poverty, raising her son, Tam, whom she and Chris shared, holding onto the hope that he will one day return. Meanwhile, Chris, believing Kim was lost in the chaos, has rebuilt his life in America with a new wife, Ellen.

When Kim discovers Chris is in nearby Bangkok, she confronts him, only to learn he is now married. Faced with this devastating reality, Kim makes the ultimate sacrifice to secure a future for her son. Beyond the unforgettable music, 'Miss Saigon' is a sweeping story that explores enduring themes of love, resilience, and the human cost of war, a truly moving experience not to be missed. It brought a tear to my eye as the story unfolded.

Whilst many of the lead actors were brilliant, I thought 'The Engineer' played by Seann Miley Moore was exceptional.

An unforgettable day out and all credit to Jan, Pauline, Sue, and Diana – the Outings team.

[Paul Membrey](#) – assisted by AI

Find out more:

You can use this link to find more details on upcoming trips:

[Outings Web Page](#)

Emerging Themes in Materials Science

Materials science is an interdisciplinary field concerned with understanding the relationships between the structure of materials and their properties and using this knowledge to design materials for specific applications with the emphasis on sustainability and advanced functionality.

The internal structure of a material—from atomic arrangements to microscopic features—strongly influences its mechanical, electrical, thermal, and optical behaviour.



Engineering themes in material science focus on developing, testing, and applying materials to create stronger, lighter, and more sustainable technologies.

But, many are developed with their end-of-life in mind. Nature continues to be a powerful source of inspiration.

Key areas include materials for extreme environments, for example the cellulose-based insulation mimics penguin feathers.

Materials have been developed to withstand extreme temperatures, pressure, and radiation, such as those used in aerospace engines (alloys), nuclear reactors, and high-temperature ceramics. Nano-materials and Nanotechnology: Engineering materials at the atomic scale (e.g., graphene, carbon nanotubes) to create revolutionary properties for electronics, sensors, and structural applications.

- **Energy Generation and Storage:** Designing materials for batteries (electric vehicles), solar cells, fuel cells, and hydrogen storage to meet sustainability goals.
- **Biomaterials and Healthcare:** Developing biocompatible materials for tissue engineering, drug delivery, implants, and anti-biofilm coatings.
- **Sustainable and Circular Materials:** Creating eco-friendly alternatives to traditional plastics, steel, and cement to enable recycling and lower environmental impact.
- **Structural Materials & Metallurgy:** Optimising metal alloys and composites through innovative manufacturing and micro-structural engineering to prevent failures in automotive and structural applications.
- **Functional Materials (Electronics/Quantum):** Developing semiconductors, sensors, and quantum materials for computing and communication industries.
- **Computational Material Science:** Using simulation, machine learning, and modelling (e.g., Density-Functional Theory) to predict material behaviour before fabrication.
- **Food:** Using Carbon Dot- Integrated Films to develop biodegradable food packaging made from biopolymers enhanced with carbon dots. Provides antimicrobial protection and can act as intelligent sensor to detect food spoilage.
- **Fabrics (clothing):** Wood Cellulose-Based Insulation Fibres to make sustainable textile fibres derived from wood cellulose, inspired as stated at the beginning by penguin feather. The aim is to replace synthetic or animal-based insulation in outdoor garments with a high-performance, recyclable alternative.

There are several videos on You Tube explaining more about the materials being used in technology, communications, furniture etc.

Written by Paul Membrey, Presented by: Jacqueline Peppiatt.

Find out more:

[STEM Group webpage](#)

Pilgrimage: Southwell to Lincoln



Blessing at Southwell

Averham is one of the the oldest churches in Nottinghamshire with evidence of Pre Conquest features. Its location right on the banks of the Trent make it impressive. It inspired T S Eliot to write part of the Waste Land.

Kelham church is medieval too, but its surroundings have changed dramatically A parkland of 42 acres was recreated and a high Victorian pile was designed by Sir Glibert Scott. In 1903 the Society of the Sacred Mission bought it as theological college, which it remained until 1972.



Averham Church

After 10 miles it was time for tea at Newark and then along the Trent, under the A46 and A1 to Winthorpe.



Admiring Holme Church

The second day started again at Winthorpe and we wound our way through Holme, Langford, Collingham, South Scarle, Eagle and Doddington. Holme is a mixture of architectural styles and was once on the other side of the Trent. South Scarle is the home of a [vamping horn](#).



The Vamping Horn

It was there that we had our first sight of the Cathedral, about nine miles away. Originally we followed the Trent Valley Trail but then it was a tramp along hard backroads until we sighted Doddington Hall.

Continued

Pilgrimage: Southwell to Lincoln – Continued

Starting at Doddington the next day, across the fields we went to Skellingthorpe, and then along the cycle track to the Fosse Dyke and the Pyewipe Inn. Pubs and pilgrims!

Then across the Common, through Uphill Lincoln to the Cathedral for a blessing.

No pilgrimage is complete without tea at the end and perhaps a scone.



On the way to Skellingthorpe



The end at Lincoln

As the new Archbishop said when asked about *her* pilgrimage "It's a real joy. It's also a real joy to know that it's finished".

More memories of churches visited, the English countryside in spring and friendships renewed and deepened.

Malcolm Capps

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.

Tom Sefton – Editor

u3a
learn, laugh, live

Addendum

Follow this link [to return to the Newsletter](#)

The University of the Third Age in Cambridge, by Dr Coni

In such troubled times, it is a pleasure to belong to an organization which is pretty well free from internal strife and antagonism, and whose main struggle is the universal one of lack of funds. This apparently peaceable community, the first University of the Third Age (u3a) to have been founded in the UK, had its origin in the fertile soil of Cambridge where it started operating in March of 1982, and the national Third Age Trust, an umbrella organization, was formed during the same year and has encouraged the development of over 1,000 u3as since then. Although some of the same people were involved in both initiatives, it has to be admitted that relationships sadly have not remained particularly cordial throughout the sector. I was intimately connected with the Cambridge venture, and have derived enormous pleasure from my personal involvement and from watching it thrive over these four-and-a-bit decades.

(The French Connection – Ed)

It has to be acknowledged that the concept of the *Université du Troisième Âge* was originally French, the first having been founded by Pierre Vellas, professor of international law at Toulouse University, in 1973. The French were fortunate in this respect, because, not having produced William Shakespeare, they were not hung up on the "seven ages of man", each with some biological marker of increasing decrepitude. They restricted themselves to a more manageable four ages; the first is childhood and education, then the pursuit of a livelihood and rearing a family, next, release into the freedom and opportunities of active retirement – and finally infirmity and ill-health. Being French, the idea developed along highly prescriptive lines; a new u3a was not allowed to use this title unless it was an offshoot of a conventional university, and the parent university not only decided what subjects would be taught to the members of its new appendage, but also sent along proper academics to teach them. At a public meeting in Cambridge's Guildhall in July 1981, some ninety people were told something about the concept and the French experience, and two outcomes emerged loud and clear. Yes, those present had long felt the need for something along the same lines and wanted to be part of the action, but no, they would not replicate the French model in this country but would demand, and develop, something much more democratic. The person who, perhaps more than any other, can claim to have been the driving force in the foundation of the u3a in this country was Peter Laslett, founder and, at that time, director, of an institution with the catchy title of the *Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure*. He was one of the founders of the Open University, and author of *The World We Have Lost*. As the first chair of the steering committee, and then of the u3a in Cambridge (u3aC) itself, he drew up some of the broad principles along which it would run. All would be taught, and all would be teachers – or at least contribute in some way to the running of the show. No qualifications would be required, and none would be awarded – its purpose was simply the enrichment of later life. It was unrealistic to expect that any public financial support would be forthcoming, as has proved to be the case, and this has sometimes disadvantaged u3aC when exchanging visits with European u3as.

Before the arrival of the pandemic on these shores, u3aC boasted a membership approaching 3,000. The number of courses available was somewhere between 300 and 400, and they varied from those of an academic nature ("the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen paradox and Bell's theorem"), through the Arts and the Humanities, to the physical. I organised our first table-tennis session, explaining that the sport was excellent for hand-eye co-ordination, but that the main athletic bonus lay in chasing after the perishing ball. The benefits of membership can be both intellectual and physical, and also, it must be added, social. I was lucky enough to meet a young woman (by u3a standards, these things are comparative) while we were both seated at the feet of a Spanish literature teacher. We have now been married for ten unexpected happy years, and a number of other members have embarked on comparable rearrangements of their social circumstances.

Continued

Addendum - Continued

Peter always insisted that the u3a was a university in the truest sense of that word, but u3as are more diverse in every way than other universities. They evolve according to the needs, wishes, and resources of their local communities, and their names may reflect these differences. In France, the cradle of the Third Age, they have lost much of the rigidity of those earlier years, and the more euphonious term of "University of Experience" has been applied to one or two of them. The membership tends to be equally heterogeneous. The female gender invariably predominates on account of its greater powers of survival, but the members differ widely in class, race, religion, occupational background, political leanings, and interests. It might be supposed that there would be a degree of uniformity of age, but the range is probably wider than can be found in almost any other group of people and extends from at least the late forties to the late nineties.

Dr Nick Coni

Find out more:

[Cambridge u3a History](#)

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