



WSPu3a Newsletter

April/May
2026



Hotchkin Golf Course

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 Rosemary

I find it hard to believe that it is almost two years since I sat at the AGM and nobody had volunteered to take over the role of Chairperson, meaning our wonderful u3a branch was in danger of folding. I had told myself to "sit on my hands" but somehow found myself asking "is it a role that can be shared" and suddenly the lovely, late Jim Cork said he would be a joint chair and that was it - we were voted in! I had no worries about fronting meetings, plenty of experience of that through work and love of acting but the panic did set in when I thought it might be a very rigid organisation with extremely formal meetings. I had no need to worry as with the support of those staying on the committee Jim and I got through those first few months just fine.

The chances are that I will continue as Chair for one final year but there is still time to put yourself forward to take over this role or show an interest in being on the committee in any position. Just email chairman@woodhallspa-u3a.org.uk or express your interest at the AGM.

Thank you to all the current committee for your support and advice and a special thanks to Ced Shurben, Wendy Cotton, Elaine Aspinall, Colin Talbot and Nigel Eborall who are stepping down this year.

I look forward to seeing you at the AGM on May 7th, 2pm at St Peter's Church Hall where we will also be entertained by the Playreading Group's performance of 'Bus Stop'.

Rosemary Brown - Co-Chairperson

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; and 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, 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

Groups News

Hope you are all enjoying the fine weather and the sunshine.

April has been a quiet month as far as Groups are concerned.

As it is the AGM soon, here's a recap of events since the last one:

2025 saw quite a few comings and goings but that's what makes our group so interesting.

[Antiques and Flower Arranging](#) started but, for several reasons, only lasted a few months as did a second Lunch group.

[Mahjong 2](#) ran for almost all the year but folded as there was no-one to step in as leader.

For the same reason we lost a large, well-established group – [Garden Visits](#).

Hopefully, in time, these groups will re-start.

On a positive note 5 new groups – [Sunday Lunch 2](#), [Solo Traveller](#), [Local History](#) and [Walking Cricket](#) – have started and are running successfully.

Members have also suggested new subjects so do keep an eye on the Newsletter and Group Board for more information.

Stay curious....Keep learning

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](#)

Coming Soon

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

The AGM of Woodhall Spa u3a will be held on:

Thursday 7th May 2026 at 14:00

St Peter's Hall, Woodhall Spa

Please note the **change of venue** from our normal monthly meetings due to elections taking place.

We will also be **starting at 2pm** to allow plenty of time for the AGM, a tea/coffee break and performances from the **Play Reading Group**.

We do have vacancies on the Committee and are looking to appoint new members. If you would like more information about any of the vacant positions, please contact me at chairman@woodhallspa-u3a.org.uk. We can also arrange for you to meet with any of the current holders to find out a bit more.

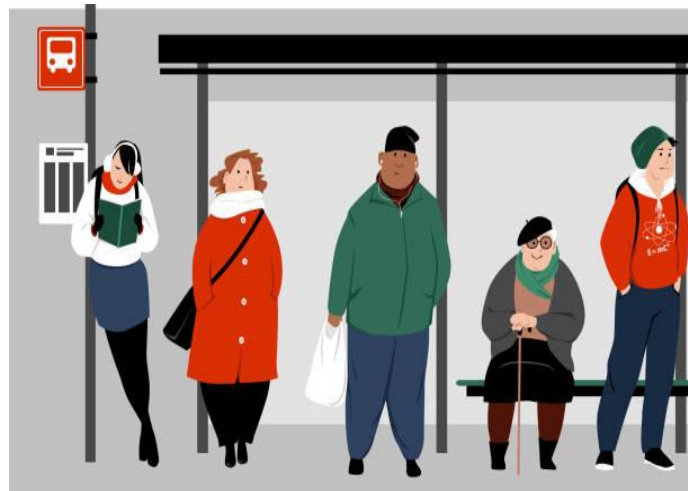
Rosemary Brown – Co-Chairperson

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

Monthly Meetings

May 7th

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

AGM and Playreading Group

Please note the slightly early start this time as we have lots to get through.
The group will be entertaining us with one of their performances

Air Ambulance


Elaine Aspinall received the following certificate from [Air Ambulance](#) regarding the donations received when they gave the talk at our monthly meeting.



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
Virtual Visits <i>This Learning Activity invites u3a members to create a short visual and written record of a visit they've enjoyed. These submissions will be used to:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspire other members or interest groups to visit new places • Create a growing gallery of real-life recommendations especially of less well-known locations. • Provide slides and stories that can be shared in meetings or talks by members both online and in local u3as. 	Virtual Visits
u3a Radio Podcast <i>Phyllida Scrivens tells us the story of a young Jewish boy who walked alone across Europe to escape the Hitler regime. We also chat with two quarter century group leaders, Margaret and Robert, on their u3a experiences over 25 years, and explore 'decluttering' with Eileen Mahoney..</i>	u3a Radio April 

Group Noticeboard

Play Reading

The **Play Reading Group** are delighted to have the opportunity to entertain you all again at this year's AGM and as a result we will be presenting a performed reading:



'Bus Stop' a comedy by Rae Shirley.

A group of women gather at a bus stop to indulge in gossip to pass the time. Their chatter is interrupted by the arrival of two strangers and a 'bookworm'.

We hope you can join us.

Rosemary Brown – Group Leader

Find out more:

[Play Reading Group Webpage](#)

Solo Travellers

The group will **not** be meeting in May due to a number of members being away on holiday. Ironic, I know!

So the next meeting will be on Wednesday 10th June at 2pm at The Dower House.

Coral Willcox

Around the Groups in 30 days

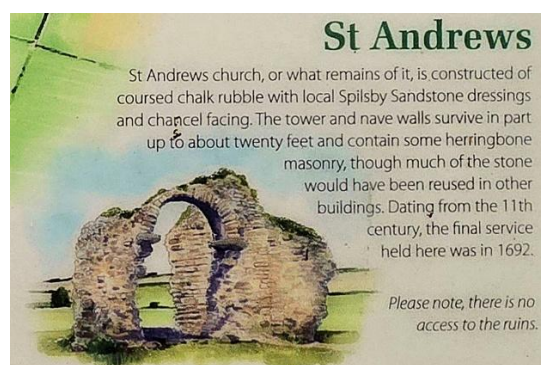
5 Mile Walking

Calceby

On a beautiful day in April our walk started from the South Ormsby Estate near the Old Schoolhouse where we were guided by leaders Pat & Colin Budge. The lovely weather resulted in a large turnout of twenty four walkers. Following the path behind a nearby quaint, white-washed thatched cottage the group headed towards Manor Farm and then across undulating fields to the hamlet of Calceby.



Outside the remains of St. Andrews church built in the 11th century which last held a service in 1692 there was an information board providing the history of the area which described the demise of the original village caused by famine, the black death and by the change by local farmers changing from crops to sheep which meant that many the farm labourers were no longer required.



Why did the village disappear

There was no one reason why many villages in the Lincolnshire Wolds shrank or were deserted – and it didn't happen suddenly. Decline was gradually and can be attributed to a range of reasons:-

Sheep & Evictions

England was at the forefront of wool production, with many landowners at this time realising that it was more profitable to produce wool rather than crops and, with much less labour required, redundant peasants were evicted. The enclosures of open fields also saw a reduction of those living on the land.



Calceby village was recorded in the Domesday Book in 1086 as having Hugh Earl of Chester as the Lord of the Manor but he was often referred to as Hugh the Fat.

After viewing the comprehensive remains of the old village the group then began the long walk passing Driby Wood before arriving at the hamlet of Driby where a coffee stop was enjoyed near to Driby Manor.



The distant views were superb and after a well earned coffee break it was onwards and upwards via bridleways and footpaths to the village of Brinkhill. Leaving Brinkhill church the group used footpaths over rolling countryside all the way back to our start in South Ormsby.

Colin & Pat Budge

Find out more:

[5 Mile Walking Group Webpage](#)

Walking Cricket

'I tend to think that cricket is the greatest thing that God ever created on earth – certainly greater than sex, although sex isn't too bad either'. (Harold Pinter)

After a cancellation two weeks ago due to a wet pitch, the Walking Cricket group finally got up and walking at Jubilee Park on a cold, cloudy, miserable Tuesday April morning. Fourteen hardy souls braved the elements to form two six-a-side teams, with John Hart as umpire and Peter Browne as scorer.

The **Village Idiots** were captained by Kevin Hogan and Jim Linke took the lead for the **Confused.Com** team. After some outdoor practice, everyone went back into a warm pavilion to review the rules and sort out the teams.

The **Village Idiots** batted first and made a strong start, with Paul and Alan scoring 45 runs in the first four overs without loss. Some decent bowling in the middle part of the innings pegged them back, especially a double-wicket maiden from Dennis just before the end, but the **Idiots** rallied as Kevin put on 19 runs in the last over for the loss of one further wicket.

Village Idiots 277-4

Interval

After the tea interval, and invigorated with hot drinks and biscuits served by Liz (thanks, Liz), the **Confused** came out to bat. They got off to a confused start, losing three wickets in the first two overs and then faced some very accurate bowling by Alan and Graham who both registered a maiden over and only conceded three runs between them in their second overs.

After eight overs the score had moved on to only 217-3. In the final part of the innings the batters increased the scoring rate with 12 off the penultimate over and lost no further wickets, but it was too little, too late.

Confused.Com 247-3

MATCH RESULT: Village idiots beat Confused.Com by 30 runs.

Despite the poor weather, everyone enjoyed the game and we look forward to our next meeting on May 12th. We now have 25 players and have started a waiting list, but anyone who wants to add their name to the list, or come and watch, is very welcome. Please contact me or Joan Willard.

Until next time here's a **CRICKET QUIZ** for you to try. Answers on page 16, [Click here](#)

- 1 In which country did cricket originate?
- 2 What is a 'duck' in cricket?
- 3 Which cricket format features matches which usually only last about three hours?
- 4 Which trophy is contested between England and Australia?
- 5 How many stumps are there in a cricket wicket?
- 6 What does LBW stand for?
- 7 What is a 'yorker'?
- 8 What is an over in which no runs are scored known as?
- 9 Who is the only batsman to have scored 400 runs in an international test match?
- 10 Who bowled the fastest delivery ever recorded, at 100.2 mph?

John Hart – Group Leader

Find out more:

[Walking Cricket Group Webpage](#)

Wild Flowers

We were lucky to have access to a privately owned wood in the process of being rejuvenated. Some of the wood is being removed and this has allowed the sunlight and air in and has improved the flora.

Ash dieback has resulted in the larger trees being infected but there is evidence of coppicing to produce stands of poles.



Bluebells provided a blue haze beneath the trees and there were swathes of *Wood Anemones* and *Celandines*. *Wood Anemones* are said to be a sign of ancient woodland. Colonies spread at a rate of six feet in a hundred years.

We were struck by the variation of colours from white to purple and purple streak.

It was good to see that the *Moschatel/Townhall Clocks* plants had spread.



Bluebells



Moschatel

We also found *Figwort*. Nothing to do with figs but the name comes from the old name for piles. The flowers and roots are said to resemble them. This a common theme in flower names with parts of the plants said to resemble the ailment or part of the body e.g. lungwort/pulmonaria

Among the plants we saw were:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Bugle</i> | <i>Celandine</i> | <i>Dog's Mercury</i> |
| <i>Dog Violet</i> | <i>Figwort</i> | <i>Greater Stitchwort</i> |
| <i>Jack by the Hedge</i> | <i>Moschatel</i> | <i>Pendulous Sedge</i> |
| <i>Primrose</i> | <i>Wood Anemone</i> | <i>Yellow Archangel</i> |

Malcolm Capps - Group Leader

Find out more:

[Wild Flowers Group Webpage](#)



Yellow Archangel

Visiting Churches

St. James', Louth

Our April visit was to St. James' in Louth. There were some twelve of us altogether, making our ways from various different directions and meeting up at the church. There is a very small car park in Bridge Street which is a short walk from the church. Jean, Judy, Kathy and myself in Jean's car, managed to get the last-but-one space!

St. James' Church in Louth boasts one of the highest medieval parish church spires, reaching approximately 295 feet, the third highest spire in the UK, Salisbury being the highest and Norwich second.



On the wall opposite the church door is a plaque commemorating the Lincolnshire Rising, which began here at St. James, when Henry VIII sent his commissioners to dissolve the abbey in Louth, and they subsequently went on to remove many treasures from the church.

The guide, who was very knowledgeable explained that though the Victorians had done some very thorough restoration to the building, they had unfortunately stripped out every bit of the 'old fashioned' medieval interior and replaced it. All the stained glass is Victorian, each of the windows having dedications, paid for by loving relatives.

Continued



St. James', Louth – Continued



The church itself is huge, almost of cathedral proportions, having had many extensions over the centuries. Louth being a wealthy wool town during the medieval period, much of the church was funded by wool merchants, until a disease known as liver fluke, which at the time had no known cure, affected many of the sheep, and the wool economy of Louth began a downward trend as did the fortunes of St. James.



There is a coffee shop in the church, and we all had tea or coffee and some superb cake before heading home.

Note:

There are peregrine falcons nesting on the roof and they have their own website!

<https://www.louthperegrines.org.uk/>.

If you wish to watch them live, click on this link, then click on Latest News, then scroll down.

Cilla Darvill

Find out more:

[Visiting Churches Group Webpage](#)

Woodhall Wanderers

Bardney

As villages expand, footpaths that once crossed fields become part of the built up area and thread their way through gardens and between and along the backs of houses. The earlier part of the walk at Bardney was a bit like that. A narrow path runs from the church to join the Viking Way and the Water Rail. From there it crosses the road and passes the pigeon lofts and pony paddocks until it reaches the road to the Abbey.



Bardney Abbey

Here the existing path crosses a field, a garden and the back of a farmyard to emerge at the Abbey. Once you arrive there it is apparent that Bardney once stood on an island surrounded by fen, which would have flooded in winter.



The Monks of Bardney

We walked up to the remains of the Abbey and looked eastwards to see the Cathedral, high on the hill at Lincoln. Founded in Anglo Saxon times, sacked by the Vikings, re-founded in 1087 and dissolved in 1538 a line of mounds now shows where the remains of the Abbey's pillars of the nave are. Once this wind swept field was the resting place of St Oswald, King of Northumberland.

Along a bridleway and a green lane we reached Scotgrove Wood, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and part of the Bardney Limewoods National Nature Reserve. Said to have had continuous woodland cover for at least 800 years, the woodland floor was a mass of deep violet blue.

Marvelling at the farmer's ability to grow crops in such straight rows for such long distances we returned to Bardney to the Open Door Cafe and the Bardney Butchers. Pie for tea!



Scotgrove woods bluebells

Malcolm Capps

Find out more:

[Woodhall Wanderers Group Webpage](#)

Art

Today we were treated to an Art Glass demonstration and opportunity to make our own art glass either pendant fridge magnet or plant marker by one of our members Barbara Miller.



April Gallery



Stef's



Hazel's



Irene's



Veronica's



Bennie's



Paul's

Next month we shall receive our fired works from Barbara who will process them in her kiln.

Our Art topic **What makes you happy**, will be completed next month when we also have an oil painting demonstration by our member Geoff Cook.

Irene Derwent – Group Leader

Find out more:

[Art Group Webpage](#)

Poetry

We had an interesting and lively meeting on the theme of Clothes. The poems chosen and composed encompassed clothes as signifier of status, clan, and expression of individuality.

Marion produced a poem about her mother's post war red suit which Marion still has.

Tom regaled us with several pieces – my favourite of which was the Archbishop being dressed (memory of childhood) in the many necessary layers before his ordination.

Irene's poem was a serenade to the many lovely pieces she has collected over time, cherishes and cannot part with.

We also read and discussed 'Warning' by Jenny Joseph, 'On Clothes' by Kahlil Gibran (from *The Prophet*) and 'The Clothes Pit' by Douglas Dunn.

I think we were all surprised that clothes were so inspiring..

The Internal Shopping Buddy

*Clothes, they never seem to fit you well, do they?
There's usually something not right
Your arms are always too short for the sleeves
These labels don't say Small Stocky Chic, so
There's no point sporting a James Bond black DJ-and-
cumberbund outfit
Your frame is simply not going to carry that off
Not with those ridiculous short legs
Crowded to the floor by that portly trunk
What were you thinking even trying it on?
The mirrors were practically curling up
with embarrassment
It's all about proportions, you see?
And yours, well, they're all out of wack
That spurt mum promised... never happened, did it?
That jacket looks so elegant on the mannequin
But even he's sneering at you now
Put it back on the rail before anyone else sees you.
Oh shut up, you've made your point.*

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"Clothes maketh the man"

*From elephant hats to leopard-skin,
My fashion journey's worn and thin—
At two years old, they called me Jumbo
(My sister, Rabbit—what a combo).*

*Then teenage angst in all-black gloom,
A walking shadow in my room,
Till sixties flair had me in bell-bottoms tight,
Yellow and red—a blinding sight.
My poor friends winced, they'd cross the street,
Afraid my trousers might compete.*

*A white blazer phase: so smart, so keen—
A nurses' disco thought I was a medicine machine.
At work, I tried the three-piece vow,
But mostly just the blue coat now.
A lawyer asked, with puzzled face,
"You wear real cuff-links to this place?"*

*Now retired, jackets line my wall—
Some serious, some having a ball.
And jeans? I swore I'd never dare,
Now they're quite normal, with a gilet flair:
In blue or maroon, the ensemble's done—
No Beau Brummell, but hey, it's fun.*

*My son? He's crisp in shirt and jacket,
No elephant hats for him to pack it.
But somewhere down in Australia's sun,
A designer shares my name—so, well, that's one.*

*So yes, clothes maketh the man, they say—
But elephants and bunnies led the way.*

© Paul Membrey (AI Assisted) 2026

Nancy Rynne – Group Co-leader

If you'd like to read more of our self-penned verses, please follow this link:

[Poetry Group Clothes](#)

Bird Watching and Wildlife

Gibraltar Point, March

Four members assembled in the car park at Gibraltar Point at 10.00 a.m. on another unpromising morning of low cloud and light rain. Because of the conditions it was decided not to head for the shore but to go to the hides overlooking Jackson's Marsh and Tennyson's Sands via The Plantation woodland, where the only spring migrant in evidence was a singing chiffchaff. After about an hour's viewing from the hides, and a finale provided by a flock of brent geese landing on the Tennyson's Sands scrape, we moved on to The Mere hide, where there was nothing new, then back to the visitor centre for refreshments, along the footpath which runs alongside the saltmarsh.

The sole bird identifiable there was a singing skylark.



Below is an alphabetical list of bird species recorded:

Avocet	Blackbird	Black-headed gull	Blue tit
Brent Goose	Canada goose	Carrion crow	Chaffinch
Chiffchaff	Coot	Curlew	Dunnock
Gadwall	Goldfinch	Great spotted woodpecker	Great tit
Greylag goose	Jackdaw	Lapwing	Lesser black-backed gull
Little Grebe	Magpie	Mallard	Moorhen
Oystercatcher	Pheasant	Robin	Shelduck
Shoveler	Skylark	Teal	Tufted duck
Woodpigeon	Wren		

We remain optimistic that next month's outing will be more rewarding in terms of weather and summer migrants.

John Watt

Find out more:

[Bird Watching and Wildlife Group Webpage](#)

Members 'Recommends'

A Day Trip to London's V&A East Storehouse

If you're looking for a fascinating day out in London that's a little different from the usual gallery visit, may I suggest a trip to the [V&A East Storehouse](#)? Nestled in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in Hackney Wick, this is not a traditional museum with velvet ropes and grand paintings. It is a working, breathing treasure chest – a 'sourcebook for your creativity' holding over half a million objects from the V&A collection, and best of all, 'general admission is free'.

We recently made the journey, and it was a captivating experience, like we'd been given a backstage pass to the world of museums.

'Getting There and What to Know Before You Go'

The journey is straightforward. The Storehouse is about an 8-minute walk from 'Hackney Wick Overground' station, or a pleasant 20-minute stroll through the park from 'Stratford station'. For those who prefer the bus, the 388 stops right outside the Copper Box building, a 2-minute walk to V&A's entrance. *Don't ask the bus driver, he took us a block too far.* There is also bus 241, which nobody tells you about, but also gets you there.

It's worth noting a few practicalities, as this is an active storage facility:

Bags and Coats: You will need to stow these in the 'free lockers' provided before entering the main hall.

Footwear: The public walkways feature 'metal grid flooring' and glass balustrades offering stunning views down to the floors below, but flat, sturdy shoes are essential. **Heels are not suitable.**

Weather: There may be a short queue outside at busy times, so bring a brolly just in case (though it will need to fit in the locker!).

'A Behind-the-Scenes Peek'

The real magic happens inside. The central 'Weston Collections Hall' is breathtaking – a space over 20 metres high, lined with rows upon rows of objects. You can even stand on a section of glass flooring and look down to the Agra Colonnade in the store below! The best approach is not to look down, but to look forward. You'll be all right.



We particularly enjoyed the 'Mini Displays' on every level. Just scan the QR codes with your phone (it didn't work on my phone) to uncover the stories behind the eclectic mix of items. For a more guided experience, look out for the **Object Encounters** – free group sessions run by staff highlighting specific pieces. Sign up at the Study Centre on Level 2.

Continued

V&A East Storehouse – Continued

A highlight of our visit was the '**Conservation Overlook**' on Level 3. Through a glass balcony and a live feed screen, you can watch the museum's conservators at work, painstakingly caring for delicate items. It's a wonderful, quiet reminder of the skill involved in preserving our heritage (like a large-scale version of TV's Repair Shop).

'Refreshments'

When you need a break, '**e5 Storehouse**' café offers a seasonal menu of pastries, sandwiches, and soups with plenty of vegetarian and vegan options. It's the perfect spot to rest your feet and discuss your favourite finds.

I always thought the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg was my most exciting museum, but now it's the V&A East that takes the prize.

A visit to V&A East Storehouse offers a completely different perspective on a national collection. It's accessible, engaging, and free – a perfect destination for an outing that sparks conversation and curiosity. Do remember to wear those comfy shoes!

Paul Membrey (AI-assisted)

The Final Word

CRICKET QUIZ ANSWERS ([Click here to return to the Walking Cricket Quiz](#))

1. England
2. A duck occurs when a batter is out without scoring any runs
3. Twenty20 (T20)
4. The Ashes
5. 3
6. Leg Before Wicket
7. A delivery that pitches right at the batter's feet
8. A maiden
9. Brian Lara, West Indies
10. Shoaib Akhtar, Pakistan

Many thanks to John – Ed

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