



WSPu3a Newsletter

September/October
2026



Tour of Britain Remembered

Photo by Carmel Sefton

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](#)

Chair's Corner

Firstly I would like to mention how much I enjoyed our speaker at the September meeting. Steve Lovell's talk was entitled 'Cuba - A Time to Salsa' which made me think it may concentrate only on that aspect of Cuba but far from it! Steve used his beautiful photos of a visit to Cuba to cover parts of its history, aspects of its natural environment as well as its cultural identity. A very confident speaker and I hope we may see him return again in the not too distant future as he does deliver talks on a range of topics. I believe this speaker was

booked by our previous Speaker Finder Elaine - so a big thank you goes to her.

Looking ahead, our January meeting on Thursday 7th will not include a speaker but we are planning more of a relaxed social event, probably including a short pantomime performed by the Playreading Group and an interactive quiz. If anyone has any ideas for anything else that could be included please do contact me: chairman@woodhallspa-u3a.org.uk. We will have our usual teas and coffee but plan to include a very important cake as an extra treat.

Rosemary Brown - Chairperson

Groups News

Autumn is here and groups are tending to now be back in action.

M.O.T.O. 2 has successfully held its first meeting where plans for the next few months were discussed. Again, many thanks to Rachel.

Scrabble 2 have also held their first meeting.

Now for the bad news...

Two groups are folding:

A very big thank you to Irene for successfully leading the **Art** group for many years. Unfortunately there is no-one to take over.

One of our games groups, **Scrabble 1** is also folding. If anyone feels they can rescue one of these, PLEASE let me know. I will help wherever I can.

"We don't stop learning because we grow old; we grow old because we stop learning". - George Bernard Shaw

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](#)

Monthly Meetings

October 1st 2:30pm to 4pm Coronation Hall	<i>Oprah Winfrey touched my shoulder</i>
November 5th 2:30pm to 4pm Coronation Hall	<i>India</i>

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](#)

Online u3a

Favourite Links

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 <i>u3a members can access a wide range of free online talks, workshops and courses through their membership. Most sessions are led by fellow members, sharing their expertise, with additional talks from notable speakers and organisations.</i>	u3a Online Learning
u3a Radio Podcast <i>Many of you will have heard of the u3a Matters member magazine but just what does it take to make it happen?</i> <i>In 2001 a few avid Jane Austen fans, in period costume, took to the streets of Bath to celebrate the famous writer's works. By 2025 that number rose to a staggering 2000. What a festival!</i> <i>Plus we find out what it is about gardening that implies hope and optimism.</i>	u3a Radio September 

Notes From The Engine Room

I assume that most of you will be reading this from the comfort of your own home but I wonder how often you think about not only the excellent stories from group members but also a little deeper on what goes on to produce our Two websites?

Back in the day, running up to the end of Covid, we had a single system which was dutiful but one got the feeling that there weren't too many people looking at it. Eventually we moved on to and found a system called Net Nurd. This was made mostly for subscribers. Nothing for people wanting to see what was on in the coming weeks etc.

Then u3a finally came up with a solution – **Two Websites!**

One website called [Beacon](#), which is hidden from the outside world and only available to a small group of Woodhall Spa u3a users such as myself, an understudy, people who need to add and remove users for any reason, the Treasurer handling the income (from you!), and Tom of course who collates and distributes this excellent monthly magazine.

Beacon contains details about our members – where they live and whether they've paid their subs.

The other website is called [SiteWorks](#). This is a different site altogether – it contains all the information you need to know such as what's happening in in the coming weeks.

It contains the list of our Groups, which you may be involved in, the time and date they meet and who the leader is. It has details of the forthcoming Outings, and it gives you notice about who the speaker will be on the next few months in Coronation Hall.

I've also expanded the reach to let you see what's going on in the wider u3a community on a national basis.

I attended a meeting in Market Raison on Saturday which was attended from all the u3a groups from Market Raison, Louth and many others in our area and we appear to be streets ahead on communication with our members.

[David Spratt – Webmaster](#)

Regional u3a

Group Leader Workshop

I think it's fair to say that we all enjoyed the Group Leader Workshop and found it extremely useful and inspiring, it gave us the chance to sit back and reflect on what it takes to make a successful group. One of the biggest things we took from the day was that the groups that have longevity and are really successful are those where the members are actively engaged, motivated and share responsibility. It also gave us some good ideas on how to incorporate succession planning from the outset to avoid the situation where a group has to fold when a leader wishes to retire from the group and there is no one to step up and take over.

[Coral Willcox](#)

Note

[Click here](#) to read the report of the workshop

Group Noticeboard

Outings

Hull Maritime Museum

Our next outing is to the [Hull Maritime Museum](#) on 18th November 26. The cost is £19.00 The Museum is newly opened after refurbishment and by all accounts is attracting many visitors. They have a good website with information.

We will leave at 9 am and return at 4pm. We are booked into the museum and the art gallery but unfortunately they have not started guided tours yet so the day is purely independent for you to spend as you wish. The museums are all free to enter. They can be found in the older part of Hull. At the moment there are still a few places left on the coach.

Thank you

Outings Group

Find out more:

[Outings Group webpage](#)

NEWSFLASH

New GroupCREATIVE WRITING

This group already has:

Co-leaders	Joan and Irene
A venue	leader's home
A date	2nd Thursday
A time	10.30 to 12.30

The first meeting will be November 12th to discuss and develop ideas.

We promise a supportive, friendly environment.

We are also planning to go out for a pub lunch after every meeting.

I now hear the words... "I can't write".

"I'm too old to start something new"

"I've never done anything like this before"

Now is the time to try something new and to look forward each month to an informal get-together with lots of laughs, the odd challenge and time to chat.

Please fill in form as usual or message me (groups@woodhallspa-u3a.org.uk)

We look forward to seeing you.

Joan Willard and Irene Derwent – Group Co-leaders

Around the Groups in 30 days

MOTO 1

Aubourn Hall Open Garden event

A few members of the MOTO 1 Group (Members On Their Own) visited the Open Garden event at Aubourn Hall on 6th September. The gardens are opened to the public just a few times each year and on this particular day they were raising funds for the Lincolnshire Rural Support Network (LRSN). We had been reassured by the weather forecast that morning saying there would be some early rain but sunshine all afternoon, so our planned 2pm arrival sounded perfect.



However, we all know the British weather is nothing if not unpredictable and raindrops began falling the moment we arrived. Undeterred, some of us took the opportunity to have a free health check in the mobile unit the LRSN take out to agricultural shows whilst others headed for the delightful little church situated within the grounds. When the rain did not seem to be stopping we made the very logical decision to go for tea and cake!

Happily the rain did soon stop and once we left the little cafe area we were able to enjoy a good look around the grounds.



There is a range of themed areas including the Prairie Garden, Stumpery and Rose Gardens as well as wooded areas and a lake side walk. At times there were excellent views to the house which we would very much liked to been able to see inside. I was using a mobility walker and managed very well through the garden areas apart from our decision to take an alternative route back from the lake – giving me a thorough work out steering my way around tree roots, bumpy grass and assorted holes!



On the plus side it did warrant a quick return to the cafe for a restorative coffee.

The open garden days have now stopped for 2026 but if you have never visited I can recommend it for a pleasant afternoon out next year.

Rosemary Brown – Group Member

Find out more:

[MOTO1 Group webpage](#)

Walking Cricket

"It's a funny kind of month, October. For the really keen cricket fan it's when you discover your wife left you in May". (Denis Norden).

September 8th Rain – Stopped Play But Never Mind...!

As our last game – which was scheduled for September 22nd – had been cancelled as Woodhall Spa CC prepares the pitch for winter, we looked forward to our last meeting of the season on September 8th. However, persistent rain throughout the morning meant that conditions were too wet and slippery for any play to be possible.

Luckily, we were able to fall back on tea and home-made cake expertly made by Liz to celebrate the end of our first season. Lemon drizzle, chocolate and banana loaf and chocolate brownies were all on offer, if you're interested, and any surplus found good homes for later on. It has been very successful – the cake and also the cricket – and it was nice to have a proper opportunity to talk about our first season, in which we won the annual cricket match against Horncastle and regained the trophy (see the [last Newsletter](#) for a match report).

Running any team sport in the u3a is quite challenging, particularly in the summer months with holidays and so many other commitments, but everybody enjoyed it and all present wanted to come back and do it all over again next year. We discussed the possibility of playing matches against other teams, either at Jubilee Park or elsewhere, and possibly getting involved in a regional tournament for the more competitive among us (you know who you are...).

We were very pleased to welcome Rosemary, who came along to display the trophy and congratulate the team, and then eat some cake. We can't quite match the Woodhall Spa CC trophy cabinet above the bar in the pavilion yet, but we have made a start...

And finally,

If you think you might want to join the group, please sign up and join us next season. We hope to get the same booking next year – second Tuesday of each month from April to the end of September, starting at 10am.

It's great for your physical and mental health, it's safe, social and friendly, and we have a lovely venue. And there's refreshments!

Everybody is very welcome.

Contact me or Joan Willard for more information.

John Hart – Group Leader

j.s.hart@sky.com

Find out more:

[Walking Cricket Group webpage](#)

5 Mile Walking Holiday

Derbyshire

Our walking holidays for the 5 milers group are always held in September week 2 and it is a wonderful time of year to be hiking. Yet again we were blessed with good weather. As little Red Riding Hood would say "not too hot, not too cold, just right".

We chose Derbyshire this year and there is a quiet beauty to walking through the dales and river valleys as the late summer light changes. Valleys, streams, limestone topography, sweeping views. It's all there in and around Bakewell and Buxton where we were based.

Friday

Derbyshire is very diverse so we were able to sample walks with differing terrain. The start of the holiday commenced with a pub meal Friday evening at the Packhorse Inn in Little Longstone. Much recommended.

Saturday



The following morning we commenced with a circular walk from Millers Dale which incorporated riverside tracks by the river Wye, towering limestone cliffs, expansive views and part of the well-known Monsal Trail.



For those who don't know, the trail is an 8.5 mile traffic free recreational route that evolved from a Victorian railway line originally constructed as part of the Manchester, Buxton, Matlock, Midland Junction railway. The line was acquired in 1980 but was rather disjointed. However a major project, the Monsal tunnels project culminated in 2011 with four, 400 metre tunnels, which were repaired, resurfaced and appropriately lit. It makes for a wonderful walk. The walk was a fantastic start to the week and we discovered muscles we didn't know we had!

Sunday

Sunday was an easier day such that we could incorporate an excellent Sunday roast at the Bulls Head in Monyash. A flat walk through Lathkill Dale which should have been alongside a small river but the extensive sunshine this summer meant that the river had temporarily disappeared!

Continued



Derbyshire Walking Holiday – Continued

Monday

The following day we started at Poole's cavern within Buxton country park. This is a fantastic facility for visitors and locals incorporating Grin Low woods which has extensive woodland trails, wildflowers and woodland wildlife. We skirted the park initially, climbing to take in amazing views. Admittedly there were pauses along the way to refresh and recharge but our lungs had a wonderful day being exercised and breathing in the fresh air.



We returned via Solomons temple, which is a distinctive landmark above Buxton and stands at 1434 feet above sea level. Built in 1896 and restored in 1988 this grade 2 listed 20 foot high Victorian folly replaced the ruins of a previous tower, which was built by Solomon Mycock, a local farmer and land owner. It sits on top of Grin Low on a bronze age burial chamber.

We returned to our cars and went into Buxton for a fabulous picnic within Buxton Gardens. After lunch we went on a hugely informative guided tour of Buxton Opera house which opened in 1903. Designed by the renowned theatre architect Frank Matcham, the theatre launched with a special written prologue and went on to host a varied program of plays, Shakespeare, ballet and touring West End productions in the years that followed. As times changed, the Opera house adapted and became a cinema in 1927 during the golden age of film. But by the 1970s it had fallen silent.



Thanks to a passionate local campaign the theatre was restored and reopened in 1979. This marked the beginning of the Buxton international festival, which continues to thrive today. It is a fascinating building with amazing ceilings and stained glass.

Continued

Derbyshire Walking Holiday – Continued

Tuesday

Tuesday we were back into the countryside starting in Tideswell but again incorporating views, fields, rivers, dales and the ever present Monsal Trail. Tideswell itself dates back to pre-Roman times and was recorded in the Domesday book of 1086 and was granted a Royal market charter in 1251. It has a magnificent church, John the Baptist, which is referred to as the Cathedral of the Peak.



Although not an actual cathedral it earned its grand title due to its massive size and striking Gothic architecture. Built mostly between 1320 and 1400 the grade 1 listed building features carved tombs, spectacular stained glass and a prominent tower. Well worth a visit.

Wednesday



We attempt to balance our walking weeks so Wednesday incorporated a walk along the Monsal Trail from Monsal Head followed by a leisurely lunch at a favourite restaurant called Piedaniel's in Bakewell.



Continued

Derbyshire Walking Holiday – Continued

Thursday

Our final day was based from the Chatsworth estate incorporating a walk along the river and glorious views from the hillside within the estate and Chatsworth house in the distance. The waterworks are amazing and the beautiful rolling parkland was strongly influenced by the legendary landscape architect Capability Brown. A fitting end to the holiday.

Exercise, laughs and good food all cementing lasting friendships. What's not to like?



Steve Parry – Group Leader

Croquet

Second Instalment – How to Play

Firstly, the game we play is called 'Golf Croquet', which is the simplest version of Croquet. There are many other variations that require different approaches.

If you've followed the first instalment in last month's [Newsletter](#), you can swing a mallet and strike a croquet ball. It's now time to coach you on **how to play**.

Order of Play

Your coach will give you instructions on how to play using the balls, which are coloured Blue, Red, Black and Yellow.

(These colours are also indicated in bands on a post placed in the centre of the court to assist you in the event of uncertainty of which colour is next to follow after you have taken your turn.)

Concentrating on your game and what you have been shown by the coach is extremely important for any match to be played with good progress and without hesitation, thereby making the game more enjoyable.

Once you have decided upon your team (two players from Four) it's now time to start a match.

Starting Play

A coin is tossed and whichever team wins will play with Blue and Black, and losers play with Red and Yellow,

Now remember **you must only strike your own selected coloured ball throughout the game**, and concentrate on watching where the balls have been placed and what your next strike should be. The coach will have shown you how and where you should aim your first strike.

Continued

How to Play – Continued

The Court

The court is marked out with boundary lines indicated as North South East and West, with all games starting in the South East corner, marked with a semicircle and Yellow flag.

The croquet ball to start a match is BLUE struck from inside the semicircle and aimed to a position somewhere in front of the first hoop.

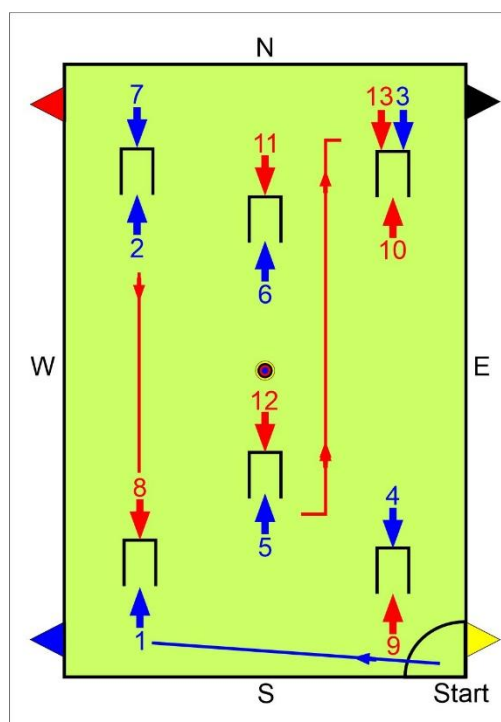
Players will then take their turn according to colour sequence. Blue, Red, Black, Yellow.

There are SIX hoops placed in a sequence which dictates the way the game proceeds.

Hoops are approached either from the SIDE or DIRECTLY to the front.

Each hoop can only be passed through from the **correct** playing side.

The diagram indicates the Route by which way the balls are played through hoops 1-7 for the first game, then 8-13 for a full game of 13 Hoops



Approach Shots

Approach hoop shots are played with the intention to gain the advantage to Run-The-Hoop, i.e. to knock your own ball through the hoop. If you can get your ball into an area in front of the playing side of the hoop then you stand a good chance of winning the hoop with your next turn.

However, once all four balls have been played from the starting point and are in various positions in front of the first hoop, one or two balls may be in a better position than yours for a hoop shot. Early tactics will now come into play, such as Knocking your opponent's ball away from their position of advantage, but bear in mind that this can also happen to your ball.

Running-The-Hoop

Should YOUR next strike attempt to run-the-hoop be 'unsuccessful' the game will continue in correct order of play until any ONE of the colours has passed through the hoop, at which point, Play will proceed onto the next hoop in sequence and your side will have either won or lost the hoop point.

Now the Game has been started you can begin to visualise how progress is made and the chaos being caused in attempting to pass through the hoops while players keep knocking their opponents' coloured balls away from positions of advantage!

Next Time

'TACTICS' will determinate if you Win or Loose.

Fancy having a go? Speak to Bob at the Monthly Meeting.

Bob Potter – Coach/Group Leader

Find out more:

[Croquet Group webpage](#)

Bird Watching and Wildlife

RSPB Frampton Marsh

Reports of there being little water and few birds at Frampton deterred some members from participation and led to relatively low expectations among the five who turned up at 10.00 a.m.,

It was immediately apparent that the monsoon's arrival had made a difference and there was much more open water than at the same time last year. In spite of this the area overlooked by the 360 degree hide was still completely dry. High tide had taken place three hours before our arrival, which had probably led to some of the birds driven on to the Reserve earlier being back on the shore. Anyway, hope springs eternal, despite the first bird seen being as mundane as a magpie.

We followed the usual circuit round the scrapes in order to arrive back at the visitor centre for mid-day lunch. The sightings board for the day showed 23 spoonbills, so four of us decided to extend the visit to see if they and anything else of note was present at the Reservoir. No such luck, only teal and shelduck and a possible curlew sandpiper which flew away, all of which we had already recorded. However, on a more positive note, seven species were added to our day list from the path which leads there.

When we returned to visitor centre the spoonbills had been deleted from the board!

Below, in alphabetical order, is a list of species seen and/or heard:

<i>Avocet</i>	<i>Blue tit</i>	<i>Canada goose</i>	<i>Carrion crow</i>
<i>Common Buzzard</i>	<i>Curlew sandpiper</i>	<i>Egyptian goose</i>	<i>Gadwall</i>
<i>Goldfinch</i>	<i>Great tit</i>	<i>Green sandpiper</i>	<i>Grey partridge</i>
<i>Greylag goose</i>	<i>Jackdaw</i>	<i>Lapwing</i>	<i>Lesser black-backed gull</i>
<i>Little ringed plover</i>	<i>Long-tailed tit</i>	<i>Magpie</i>	<i>Mallard</i>
<i>Marsh harrier</i>	<i>Moorhen</i>	<i>Mute swan</i>	<i>Pied wagtail</i>
<i>Robin</i>	<i>Ruff</i>	<i>Shelduck</i>	<i>Snipe</i>
<i>Starling</i>	<i>Swallow</i>	<i>Teal</i>	<i>Wigeon</i>
<i>Woodpigeon</i>	<i>Wren</i>	<i>Yellow wagtail</i>	<i>Yellowhammer</i>

John Watt

Find out more:

[Bird Watching and Wildlife Group webpage](#)

Outings

A Day Out to Melton Mowbray and Barnes Dairy Farm

Another 9 am start on Stixwold Road, waiting for the Dickinson's coach to arrive, full of anticipation for the day ahead under a cloudy sky with the threat of a shower. However, we were pleasantly surprised that the good weather held for most of the day. Our careful lady driver, Julie, made the 2-hour journey effortless, taking us through Grantham and on to Melton Mowbray's town centre bus station, just a short walk from the high street.



[Melton Mowbray's centre](#) retains its historic market-town character, with a compact, largely pedestrianised high street and a market tradition dating back to the Domesday Book. The town is famous for Stilton cheese and Melton Mowbray pork pies, and independent shops sit alongside familiar high street names (I chose to buy a pork pie with a Stilton dressing). Recent investment has focused on revitalising the market with new stall canopies, signage and seating to enhance the town's heritage and public spaces. After a three-hour break, we headed back to the coach for a 20-minute drive to Barnes Dairy.

Continued



Barnes Dairy Farm – Continued

Our group enjoyed a fascinating day visit to this dairy farm, which proved a wonderful reminder of how much goes on behind a simple pint of milk.

We began with a warm welcome from Jane Barnes and an introductory talk covering the farm's history and day-to-day running.



The herd was the undoubted star of the show; we watched the cows being milked and learned about the careful breeding, feeding and welfare that keep them healthy and productive. It was eye-opening to hear how much technology now supports traditional farming, from monitoring systems to the dairy itself.



Highlights of the day included:

- A guided tour of the milking parlour in action
- Meeting the calves, always a favourite with our members
- A tractor tour around the grazing pastures
- A chance to sample and buy fresh dairy produce

Continued

Barnes Dairy Farm – Continued

Our hosts were generous with their time and knowledge, patiently fielding everything from questions about organic methods to the economics of modern dairy farming. Several members commented on what they took away from the visit.

For anyone interested in learning more or planning their own trip, details can be found at www.farmerbarnesdairy.com.

A thoroughly enjoyable day out, one we would happily repeat. Thanks to all who came along and to the Outings Team, who made it such good company.

Paul Membrey (AI assisted)

Photos by Jan Smith, Eileen Harris, and Paul Membrey

Find out more:

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

[Outings Web Page](#)



Dog Walking

Our walk this month started at the Wong at Horncastle. It was a lovely sunny day with a gentle breeze. We walked along side the river Bain as far as Thornton Lodge. We then crossed over the bridge and walked back along the track at the other side of the river.



The dogs enjoyed the freedom and are now feeling very comfortable in each other's company. It's a really pleasant walk with opportunities to see the variety of wildlife. At the end of the walk we visited The Big Chair Cafe, a very interesting place to visit with lots of unusual objects and furniture.

Judy Binks – Group Leader

Find out more:

[Dog Walking Group webpage](#)



Wild Flowers

Kirby Moor

In September we went to Kirby Moor for the last outing of the year and *think* we identified the following:

Autumn Hawkbit

Fly Agaric

Ragwort

Bugle

Heather

Rowan

Daisy

Marsh Hawkweed

Storksbit

Devil's bit Scabious

Northern Hawkweed

Tormentil

Identifying plants is one of the puzzles for the Wild Flowers Group,



Fly Agaric



Autumn Hawkbit



Heather

The daisy family is very large. Hawkweeds are an exceptionally variable and a difficult group with some hundreds of microspecies: Mouse ear, Few leaved, Leafy, Alpine, Orange, Ox tongue, and Bristly Ox tongue look much the same with only minor variations.

Sometimes it comes down to a careful examination on hands and knees of leaves and flower clusters. The English name of Hawkbit and Hawkweed is reputed to derive from the mediaeval belief that hawks ate the plant to improve their eyesight.

Flowers were few but it turned out to be a pleasant walk full of wildlife. Within a few minutes a woodlark had risen and began its lilting song. The heather was still blooming.

There were Painted Ladies and Speckled Wood butterflies, Darter dragonflies and brambles, rose hips and holly berries were in abundance. There was a fine display of fly agaric, Eaten corn on the cob suggested other animals were about. The heath is riddled with rabbit burrows and must be a feast for foxes, birds of prey, weasels and stoats.

Malcolm Capps – Group Leader

Find out more:

[Wild Flowers Group webpage](#)



Woodlark



Painted Lady

Home Computing for Fun

AI Is Coming to Your Home!

AI is moving into your computer

Until now, AI tools like chatbots ran on giant computers far away in big buildings called data centres. You sent your question over the internet, and the answer came back. Now, something new is happening: computers can run AI right at home, all by themselves. That means it's faster, and your stuff stays private because it never leaves your house.

The big one is called RTX Spark. It's a super-fast chip for Windows computers that can do AI jobs all on its own — no internet needed! It's so powerful that it can even handle really big AI programs. New laptops and small computers with this chip are coming this autumn from popular brands you might know.

Your computers can work as a team

There's a free tool called PAIR. Here's how it works: if your house has more than one computer, PAIR links them together over your home Wi-Fi. When you ask for something big, it sends the job to whichever computer is fastest and not busy. So if your laptop is slow but your older brother's gaming computer is just sitting there doing nothing, PAIR can borrow its power! It's like your devices helping each other with homework.

Other cool new stuff

There's more happening too:

- Windows PCs — New 'Copilot+' computers were shown at a big tech show in Berlin called IFA. There's the Vero 16 from Acer, which is made partly from recycled materials (good for the planet!), and the super-light Swift Blade 14 that's easy to carry around. There's also ASUS's ProArt P16, which is made for people who love making videos and art.
- Apple Macs — Apple has new Mac mini and Mac Studio computers with brand-new M6 and M5 chips. They're built to run AI too. But watch out — they cost more now, so save up!

Bad news: prices are going up

Here's the not-so-fun part. There aren't enough memory chips (called RAM) in the world right now. RAM is what helps your computer remember things while it's working. Because there isn't enough, computers cost more than they did last year. So if you're thinking about buying one, it might be pricier than you expect. Even Apple's prices went up!

Our tips

No rush. If your computer still works fine, keep it! You don't need a new one just because something new came out.

Pick the right one. For school, games and watching videos, a normal computer is plenty. You don't need a supercomputer for everyday stuff.

Paul Membrey (AI-assisted) – Group Leader

Find out more:

[Home Computing for Fun Group webpage](#)

5 Mile Walking

Folkingham Circular walk

Our September walk started and finished in the historic village of Folkingham, 9 miles south of Sleaford. We enjoyed a lovely Autumn day for our walk with a clear sky, a gentle breeze and a comfortable temperature.

On leaving the village, we passed earthworks of the former Folkingham castle (Norman, late 11th century) and the former prison built in 1808 and demolished in 1955. The only part of the building surviving today is the impressive gatehouse with its imposing inscription 'House of Correction'. The property is currently owned by the Landmark Trust who rent it out for holiday visitors.



Our route then took us on grassy footpaths and gravel tracks with views of the surrounding countryside. At the halfway point we passed by earthworks of Sempringham Priory, founded by St. Gilbert in 1131, before arriving at the parish church of St. Andrew, (12th century). The church is the only building remaining from the religious community and hamlet of Sempringham.

After a well-deserved refreshment, some of our group undertook a short detour to view the memorial to Princess Gwenllïan.

Gwenllïan (1282–1337) was the daughter of Llewelyn, 'the last Prince of Wales'. Llewelyn was murdered on the orders of Edward 1, who subsequently arranged for the 18-month old Gwenllïan to be kidnapped and held captive at Sempringham Priory for the rest of her life.

The latter part of the walk was slightly hampered as a field that we crossed had been ploughed very recently,



obliterating evidence of the footpath as well as being heavy going! Despite this, we all enjoyed the walk and after a short rest, we completed our journey with a clear view of Folkingham.

Hamish Forbes

Find out more:

[5 Mile Walking Group webpage](#)

Poetry

There were four of us at this our first meeting after the summer break. We welcomed Veronica to her first session with us.

We opened with a discussion of two poems about grief and loss... 'The Attic' by Andrew Motion and 'The Widower's Button' by Brothwick. Irene read two contrasting pieces: one about the names we give our cats by T. S. Eliot, and a less well known one by Rudyard Kipling, 'The Glory of The Garden'.

Veronica read her own poem 'I had a Dream' which led to a discussion about dreams, wishes and hopes we all had.

Tom produced two of his usual deep and serious pieces.. 'Does the Cosmos even know me?' and 'English Gothic-Might this be The End?'. As usual these poems were starting points for discussions about life, ageing and dreams.

We enjoyed some lovely chocolates and exchanged experiences we had during the summer.

English Gothic – Might this be The End?

**Prefecting – performing the duties of a prefect..*

*Ever since you moved on
My hand no longer finds my pocket in just one move
Your face, once so easily drawn is losing by degree its previous clarity
My Isolation has occupied your vacancy
A strange negated presence
As welcome as a washing bowl wet cuff*

*Every day requires a Möbius trip through our spaces
Drawing old laughter from the walls
The outer diversions have morphed inward
Black holes form in hollowed out places
I sit and watch my vision closing down
Chasing slow retreating memories
Like a dream deconstructing on my tongue in the telling
For the want of a coherent image and one more forgotten noun*

*There's someone in the attic, I hear them talking – moving things around
Night spirits whispering ancient languages fight for space in my ear
I see their words but I am no longer the writer*

*Are you sitting comfortably?
Every old bone was a new bone once
Screw the furniture to the floor
Stand on the right, walk on the left
Clap on the two and the four*

*I've lived with this mania many a long year
The decay – incremental now
I've grown accustomed to its ordinances and strange ways
Prefecting me through the days
Though I'll be relieved when the home bell sounds
And there I'll be, a genetic end-of-line model
No more than a pile of stones and a wishing tree
Dressed in leaves of faded trivialities*

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I had a dream

*That I would climb a mountain
that my heart would be counting
That I would build that mountain.*

but

*Now my dream has changed for life
and so has the world that is full of strife
That the world is a better place.*

*I had a dream
That the street will be clean
The war will be thrown away
forever and a day.*

*That children will not run away
That life could run on a nice wish
with food upon a dish*

*When I lay down in my bed
A strange thought comes into my head
What if I was a star
Driving round in a sporty car.*

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Nancy Rynne– Group Co-Leader

Find out more:

[Poetry Group webpage](#)

Tattershall and Coningsby

We met on an uncharacteristically cool and cloudy morning in the Market Place car park at Tattershall. Crossing the Market place we observed Tom Thumb's house set on the ridge tiles of one of the houses opposite. We crossed the main road and after about 140 metres turned left to follow a footpath alongside the remains of the Horncastle canal to the bridge over the River Bain at Tattershall sluice. We kept an eye open for the Heron which patrols the Sluice; one of our eagle eyed members located the Heron high in a tree near the Sluice. After crossing the river we turned right, with views towards Tattershall Castle and Holy Trinity Church to our right and then turned left to follow the path between two lakes to a road in Coningsby.



Approaching the bridge at Tattershall sluice we caught a glimpse of the Heron still perched high in its tree. After crossing the bridge we took a left fork to Holy Trinity Church where we stopped for coffee and a well-earned piece of cake.

Continued

We followed this road into the centre of Coningsby. The sun was now shining and the temperature had risen considerably since the start of the walk. We turned right at the High Street and after half a mile we followed a lane left towards Tattershall Thorpe. Crossing the river we turned left along the footpath returning in the direction of Tattershall. In the distance we were rewarded with views of Tattershall Castle and Holy Trinity Church.





We were able to look at the beautiful medieval stained glass Chancel windows. All the other windows have plain glass which gives a light airy interior to this magnificent Collegiate Church (Priests were trained in the college, now ruins, near the Church.)

We also found the floor plaque dedicated to Tom Thumb, a native of Tattershall, who was reputedly just over 18 inches tall and lived to be 101 years old. We felt that maybe these facts had become somewhat embellished over the years.

We returned to the Market Place passing by the Alms-houses which used to house 13 old people.

Find out more:

[Woodhall Wanderers Group webpage](#)

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

Note:

The following report of the workshop has been provided by Sandra Dean of West Wolds u3a

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u3a Group Leaders Session – A Strong Step Forward

Our Group Leaders Session on 19th September was one of our most constructive gatherings yet, bringing together leaders from West Wolds u3a and neighbouring u3as. The room buzzed with shared experience, honest reflection, and a clear commitment to strengthening support for all our groups.

Leaders spoke openly about the challenges of starting out – from knowing who to contact to managing waiting lists, room changes, and the practicalities of running a group. Their insights highlighted how much difference clear guidance and a friendly point of contact can make.

We also heard encouraging stories from leaders who had benefited from national and local u3a resources, subject advisers, and peer networks. Their experiences showed how powerful it is when local and national support work together.

Throughout the afternoon, leaders exchanged ideas and identified simple improvements that would make a big impact. This included practical checklists, better visibility of committee roles, and more opportunities to share ideas.

One message stood out: our u3a thrives when leaders feel equipped, appreciated, and connected. The session gave us a clearer picture of what leaders need and renewed our commitment to providing it. Follow-up resources and future support sessions are already being discussed.

A warm thank-you to everyone who attended.

Your enthusiasm and honesty are what keep our u3a community strong.

What Guests Thought

The workshop ran for over two hours and was packed with practical guidance for current and future Group Leaders. West Wolds u3a Leaders Jane Guy and Sandra Dean, supported by Terry Francis, delivered an engaging and informative session. Jane's experience with the large Gardening Group and Sandra's passion for leading multiple groups, especially Languages, made their insights invaluable. As a newer member, I felt warmly welcomed and gained useful tips, especially during the troubleshooting activities. Sessions like this are essential for keeping u3a vibrant and forward-looking. I left feeling inspired to consider becoming a Group Leader myself.

Cathy Green, New Member

Thanks go to Sharon Rupp, West Wolds Chair, for championing this initiative; Terry Francis for technical support on the day; Jane Guy for sharing her insights into effective group leadership; and Sue Boorman for providing much-appreciated refreshments. And a final thank-you to everyone who attended and helped make the session such a success.

Sandra Dean

Together, we keep u3a thriving.



Members of Louth and West Wolds u3as in discussion. All images, S.Dean



A powerful afternoon of insight, connection, and practical support



A room full of ideas, encouragement, and shared experience from Lindsey, Louth, West Wolds and Woodhall Spa.