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NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2025

From the Chair: welcome to November's newsletter. You will all have received the fire evacuation procedure. As those of you who were at the October meeting will be aware, faced with the reality of an alarm rather than a hypothetical one, we didn't altogether cover ourselves with glory, so it was as well that it was a false alarm.

It is extremely unlikely that it will happen again, but it always pays to be prepared – guess who was a girl guide! There are two things to bear in mind when you come to a general meeting:

- always make sure you have signed in, even if you arrive late
- listen carefully to the safety announcements at the start of each meeting

If that puts you in mind of the announcements on flights about always attending to the safety briefing before you take off, it should!

Despite the cheerless weather, our plans for Christmas are coming together. The December meeting will take place on **Wednesday 10th December**, usual time, usual place. We're very much looking forward to welcoming you to tea and light refreshments in the company of the Weston Community Choir. Note the change of date – we don't want to get in the way of any other celebrations you'll be indulging in on Christmas Eve.

Here's hoping for a good turnout at an uneventful general meeting on 26th November, Chris.

General Meetings

Graham Keal – Oprah Winfrey Touched My Elbow

Not so much a lecture more of how many celebrity names could be listed in an hour. There were names who were as interviewees for a newspaper journalist, regarded as co-operative, kind and considerate, to others who obviously had forgotten where they came from and regarded reporters as a work hazard and an inconvenience.



Graham worked as a journalist for a number of publications and specialised in celebrity interviews. Some were remembered fondly, others best forgotten. Top of the list were Eric Morecambe, Frank Ifield and Henry Kissinger. Further down the list were Jimmy Tarbuck, Vanessa Feltz and Noel Edmonds. Where did the title come from? Quite simply from brushing past him in a doorway. Could easily have been called Liz Hurley smiled at me or Johnny Vegas threw one too many obscenities!

dp

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO WRITE A REVIEW OF FORTHCOMING SPEAKERS – GOOD, BAD, INDIFFERENT, FUNNY, WAYWARD - PLEASE CONTACT ONE OF THE COMMITTEE

Speakers Corner

November 26th Tales from a Dairy Farmers' Wife

Let's pretend we are going to the countryside for a day on the farm and meet the cows who produce milk for local Stilton Cheese.



Presented by Jane Barnes

December 10th u3a Christmas event with special guests **The Weston Community Singers**

As part of our Christmas festivities, entertainment will be provided by the Weston Community Singers who will sing popular songs and seasonal delights.



The community singers originally started in 2015 and includes members from many of the villages surrounding Weston including Newark.

The songs they perform span many genres from traditional to popular music of the day. Performances also include instrumental pieces played by Musical Director Linda on the clarinet and saxophone.

Coming Soon

The Curious Case of Olde Time Punishments

Going Underground: An Exploration of Nottinghamshire's Subterranean Spaces

Nottinghamshire Puddings: Fact or Fiction

Many thanks for all the suggestions and contributions regarding Speakers. When making suggestions please supply a current email contact. We try to promote a varied programme and we know not all subjects will be appreciated. However, your attendance and feedback on recent events is welcomed.

dp

Groups

Contacting Group Leaders

If you need get in touch with Lesley, our Groups Co-ordinator, or with any group leader, please use the contact page on our website:

<https://collingham.u3asite.uk>

So, you think you can drive

We had another very informative session and are continuing to find out what we do, and, more importantly, **don't know** about the Highway Code. It's proving to be a huge learning curve for all of us. Don't be scared to find out what you don't know-come and join us!

Lesley

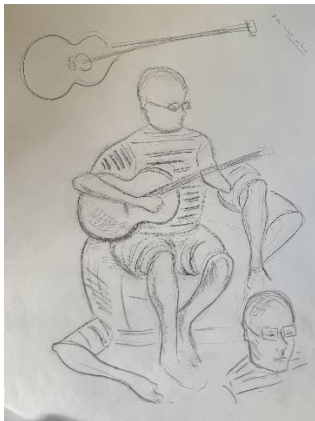
Bridge

The Bridge group meets weekly Friday 2-4pm in Beyond Coffee.

Drawing



Our session this time was enlivened by Jackie's husband, Keith, who both posed for us and entertained us with his wonderful guitar playing. This was a truly superb drawing session for all 7 of us-our thanks go to Keith and Jackie for making this such a special session.



The next session on 5th December will be at Penny's house (cancelled from last time) I'm really looking forward to it!

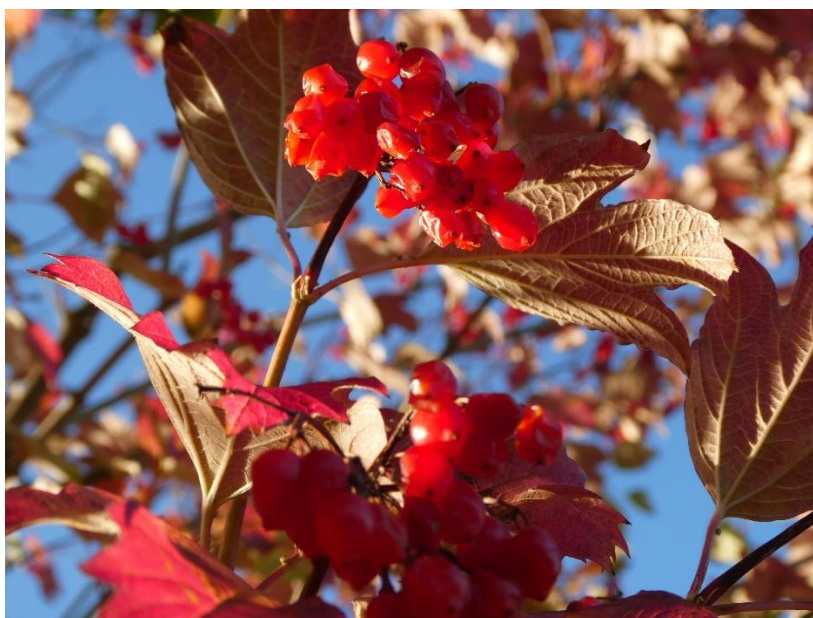
Lesley

Photography

This month our theme is "Autumn Glory". Autumn is a season of change and can start with a heatwave and end with snow on the ground. Our objective was to capture some of the things we like to see in and are typical of this season. We are not having a theme for December. Instead, we are going to show a selection of images taken in 2025, that are our favourites.



Belton Courtyard by Colin Smith



Rowan Berries by Janet Macpherson

There are 14 more Autumn photographs from the Photography group throughout this newsletter...

Breakfasters

We met at The Courtyard Cafe (A57/1133 junction) and were very happy to find that a barn extension had been put at our disposal. It was beautifully decorated and the log burner had been on for hours-thank you!

Our breakfast chat was lively, as usual, and the food was super, but possibly not as hot as it should have been as there was a short walk from the kitchen to the barn-across the small outside yard. Still, no worries, we all enjoyed this lovely venue.

Our next venture will be to the fairly new "Gannets" at Middlebeck.

If anyone would like to join us then please get in touch as I always need to book ahead.

Lesley

Weekenders

The Weekenders have a monthly meeting, the 4th Saturday of the month at The Lord Nelson, Winthorpe 10.30 - 12

We discuss any suggestions for outings for the coming month. In October we spent time looking at holiday possibilities for 2026, although no firm decisions were made. A group are going to The Palace Theatre for One Night in Dublin in November.

Chris D



Trent in October by Andrew Roberts

Creative Writing

Our theme this month was “Growing old disgracefully”

We had both written short pieces which we duly read to each other, before moving on to other topics and pieces of writing that we wanted to share-both our own and from more established writers. We are always full of praise for each other's work, which is a huge confidence boost.

Our next theme is to take a well-known piece of art work and write a “back story.” Let's see what this subject brings.

If you would like to join us then please get in touch with Lesley.

Out and About

Finally, the Out and About group has gone to the dogs!

On Monday the 27th October John Geeson organised a night to the Greyhound Stadium at Colwick.



19 members went and had a great three course meal and saw 12 races from the restaurant overlooking the race track. There was lots of cheering when members saw their greyhound come past the post in first place. A good night was had by all of us, looking forward to the next one in the New Year.



History

At our October meeting, Louis spoke about the history and background of a country he has visited several times, Iceland. Thank you, Louis, I confess I didn't know very much about the country, but like many of us I would have liked to pay a holiday visit.

Our November meeting will be on Friday 28th in the YCC at 10.00. When Charlie and small group of other members will be giving a presentation on 'Explorers.'

As December draws ever closer, a reminder that our Christmas meeting and quiz will be on 19th at the later time of 11.00am. We will be welcoming the Quiz group, who are also due to meet on this date. I'm very much looking forward to this event and meeting new friends although hoping that I have enough knowledge to take part! Don't forget to bring a selection of Christmas food offerings and perhaps fruit juice.

Ann

Thursday Talking Shop

The next meeting will be on Thursday 27th November at 2pm when we will ask questions around the topic of Anarchism. When did this political theory emerge? Who were its advocates? Are anarchists about much more than smoke bombs and Molotov cocktails? So many questions - should be an interesting session...

Anita



Belton Hall Gardens by John Geeson

Family History

At our November meeting we heard two presentations by group members. Carole told us of her great-great grandfather Edward Harris who was born in 1803. At the age of 23 he decided to leave his occupation of file cutter in Sheffield and enlist in the army. He served for 22 years in the 3rd Regiment of Foot, East Kent Regiment known as The Old Buffs. Seventeen years were spent in India and he fought in two major battles in a campaign in Central India.

In 1845 he was back in England, possibly stationed in Cheshire where he married. He was then posted to Ireland and we know that his wife accompanied him because Carole's great grandmother Elizabeth was born in Dublin. Edward was discharged from the army in 1847 on medical grounds attributed to his time in India. They returned to Sheffield and he took up his old job of file cutting. He died in 1874 aged 70.

Ivor presented our second talk about his father Alfred Clifford, born in 1901. He was born into a mining community in a South Wales village and at the age of 14 began work at the local colliery. We heard about working conditions for the men and also the pit ponies that shared their labour. Alfred became a coal hewer working at the coal face often lying down to hack at a seam no more than 20 inches thick.

We heard about home life and community activities in a mining village and followed Alfred as he marched to London during the General Strike of 1926. Here he met Ivor's mother and Ivor told us of his memories of the family home back in their South Wales mining village in the 1950s.

We followed the talks by a short time researching Barry's ancestors but more to come on that next time!

Charlie



Lakeside in Autumn by Colin Smith

Local History

In this month's meeting we decided to focus on old houses/buildings around the Newark area with members choosing particular properties for their individual presentations.

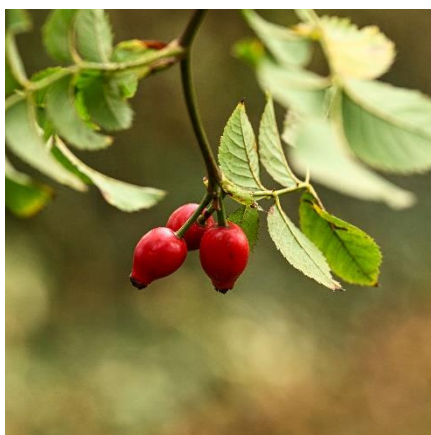
Ivor gave a talk on a building that was a former Newark factory that manufactured a range of woven willow baskets. His interest had been piqued by the number of osier beds growing willow saplings that can still be found on old maps of the village. In part answer to 'what was their economic use' he came across a now defunct Newark company called Mills Warehouse Ltd located in a large building at 'Weavers Way' close to the Trent. The factory was once part of Newark's basket weaving and milling industry and made a range of woven baskets in its workshop. It closed all its activities in 1979.

Charlie's talk concerned the history of the medieval Knights Templar Preceptory, located at Temple Bruer Lincolnshire just 2.5 miles north of Cranwell. The knights had a military role and uniform derived from their participation in the crusades and were organised under the leadership of a Grand Master. This site had a monastic layout of its various buildings and became a wealthy institution through banking, donations from nobility, papal privileges and the local wool trade. The order was dissolved in 1312 and its money taken up by the Knights Hospitallers, themselves later dissolved 1536-1541. All that now remains to be seen is the 13th century tower.

Closer to home, Paul elected to present the history and evolution of his own house, 'The Barn', 12 The Green in South Collingham once part of Yew Tree farm. The barn itself dated around 1850 and had been a threshing barn. With the use of early aerial colour photos Paul was able to take the meeting through the development of the farm site to its current form, noting evidence of timber framing of certain buildings along the way. It is likely that this part of the village had a very early origin from Roman and Saxon ceramic pottery sherds found in his garden.

No meeting is scheduled for December; the next meeting will be Wednesday 14 January.

David



Rose Hips by Paul Bass



Terrific Topper by Pat Morgan

Literature Group

We have been reading 'The Wind Knows My Name' by Isabelle Allende. This book is about refugees, and parallels with history. The story begins with 'Kristallnacht' in 1938 Vienna, and takes us through to modern day Donald Trump's harsh immigration policies at the Mexican border which has become a legal limbo land.

Some felt that the story jumps around too much, but you have to admire the ground that Allende covers - immigration, detention centres, the role of the US in Central America, human trafficking, and violence against women. There are times when it is harrowing and certainly emotive, and we found the opening chapter in Vienna particularly moving.

We are now delighted to be reading 'Purple Hibiscus' by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

Sheelah



Cambridge College by Gill Bass



Glory on the Green by Jannet Wright

Sing-along

We continue to progress, extremely well indeed and it certainly does seem, as though the Christmas festive season, is not too far away now!

The focus is now mainly on, reminding ourselves, of the Christmas Carols. After getting the music and the words, for each individual song we made a good start! We were all reminding ourselves, of the festive season and decided preparing early is a great idea so that when Christmas arrives, we can look back, at how well we did!

Other suggested songs, such as those from the musicals, will also continue to progress over time. Everyone continues, with their ongoing support, bringing such a significant and exciting, era of excellence, which will develop more and more as time moves on.

Louis



Open Fungi by Andrew Roberts



The Webs of Autumn by Jannet Wright

Bowling

The Winter season is well underway at Grantham Indoor Bowls Club; we now have 18 Members! all seemingly having fun trying to master this game.

With Santa soon to be on our doorsteps I have sent my letter off, no doubt I will get socks but I would really like some Bowls that get nearer the Jack or is it not the Bowls fault?

Anyway, let me be early in wishing all our readers the very best Christmas wishes and I hope to see lots more enthusiastic members coming along. Don't be put off by thinking you're not good enough, you haven't seen the rest of us. Clive B



Pink Berries by Janet Macpherson



Pumpkins and Squash by Pat Morgan

Fantasy Football

In a League of our Own

So, we're almost 1/3rd of the way through the season and things are hotting up at the top of the table. Right now, top with 598 points is millers11 managed by Collingham's answer to Pep Guardiola, Charlie Stothard. This puts Charlie at 3,518,379 in the worldwide league of 12,474,507 participants. Hot on his heels are Moon Howlers (head coach John Lewis) with 589 points followed by Louis Lovegrove's team, Chelsea Louis with 549 points. And an honourable mention goes out to Louise for scoring a very impressive 91 points in game week 10. Just to add some context top of the whole Barclays league worldwide is a team with 821 points! But it's a marathon not a sprint and a lot can happen in the remaining 27 game weeks. Still all to play for.

Just to end with some words of football 'wisdom':

Stuart Pearce: 'I can see the carrot at the end of the tunnel' Who knows, maybe the stadium was next to a greengrocers.

Then occasionally football people actually say something a bit more profound:

Arsene Wenger: The imprint you make on the spirit of the people is more important than the result.

COYW! and that's it for me this time - next contribution in January 2026.

Cheers, John



Golden Hour by Paul Bass

Quiz group

The quiz held at the end of October against the Southwell quiz u3a quiz group ended with another win for Collingham. They would like another opportunity in the Spring to try and beat us so we might give them another chance.

Well, this crazy group of quizzers have had another interesting and fun session. Carol W was the quiz master this month & was kind enough to include a couple of questions that the group leader was able to answer correctly. This month's session was held at the Lord Nelson in Winthorpe due to our usual venue being otherwise occupied. The overall contest was another close, informative & fun morning.

Next month we will be with the History group at the YCC for a joint Christmas meeting on 19/12/25 at 11 am. There will be a quiz covering subjects covered by the History group this year as well as some fun random questions.

We are all looking forward to another year of quizzing and we hope more people will join us then.

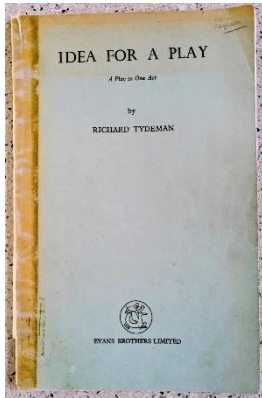
John



Hartsholme Path by John Geeson

Play Reading

We met this month to read an interesting one act play by Richard Tydeman, titled “Idea for a Play”.

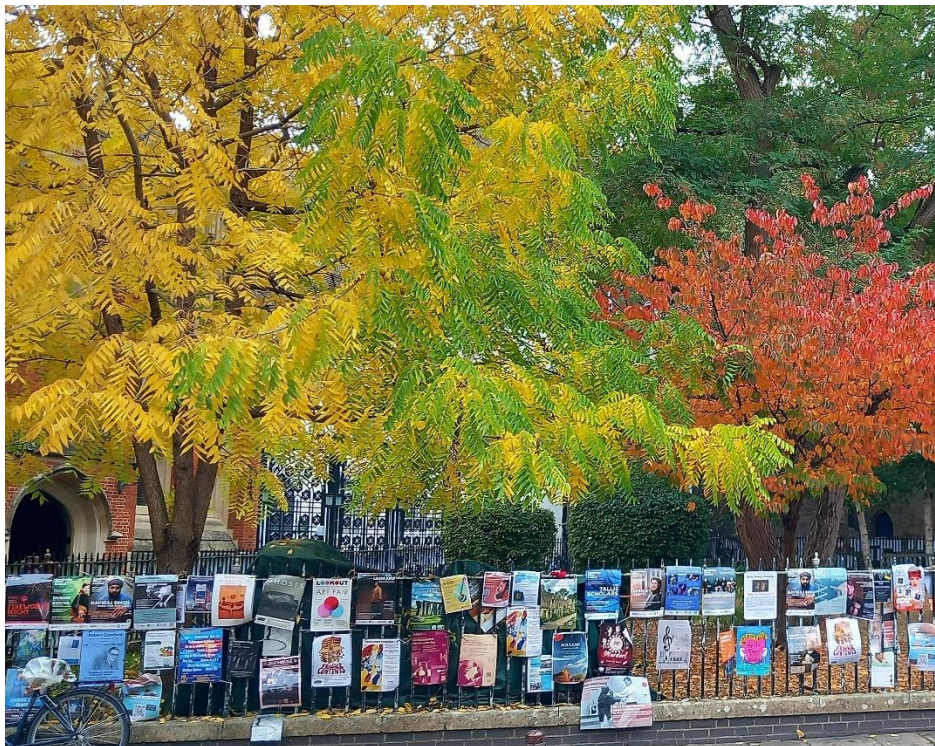


The play was kindly lent to us by Pat and Keith Morgan; Keith had been involved in a student production at university.

The story involves a group of amateur actors. They have asked their producer to write a play for them to enter in a festival; and they are not entirely happy with what he has written. It is essentially a modern morality play, where Religion, Science, Education, Vice and Virtue are vying for Humanity’s soul. There is, however, plenty of behind-the-scenes drama, falling props and humour, involving the actors themselves.

In December we will be out to Christmas lunch and then will resume Play Reading on January 20th with a thriller; At the Sign of “The Crippled Harlequin”.

Sue



What's On by Gill Bass

Sunday Lunchers

For our November's u3a Sunday Lunch, twelve of us travelled to The Full Moon, at Morton, Southwell, Notts. NG25 OUT, and had an excellent, and very generous meal.



Our next u3a Sunday Lunch will be on January 11th, 2026.

Margaret

Table Tennis

Our friendly table tennis group **usually** meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month at the Winthorpe Community Centre for 1 hour from 10 – 11 am. Afterwards many of us enjoy a cup of coffee and the occasional cake at the Lord Nelson in Winthorpe. We do provide bats and balls and new members are always welcome.

Do come and give it a try!

Peter

For your diary the dates going forward are as follows:

Thursday November 20th from 10:00 to 11:00 am – out of sequence

Thursday December 11th from 10:00 to 11:00 am

Provisional dates for January to March 2026:

Thursday	January	15 th	from 10:00 to 11:00 am
Thursday	January	29 th	from 10:00 to 11:00 am
Thursday	February	12 th	from 10:00 to 11:00 am
Thursday	February	26 th	from 10:00 to 11:00 am
Thursday	March	12 th	from 10:00 to 11:00 am
Thursday	March	26 th	from 10:00 to 11:00 am

Italian

The group meets in the home of the group leaders on the second and fourth Monday of each month.

At our Grammar session in October, we worked on using verbs that were opposites.

For example:

to open (aprire) to close (chiudere)

to start (iniziare) to finish (finire)

People worked in pairs to create a 'one sentence story' using both verbs. They could use whatever tense was appropriate for what they wanted to say.

When we had heard everyone's story and refreshed our brains with tea, we read and translated the next instalment of the book we are reading.

Jannet and Mary

Art Appreciation

We meet at the Youth and Community Centre on Low Street on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 2pm.

William Nicholson was the subject of our meeting in October. He was born and educated in Newark but his work was not well known to all of us. Examples of his work can be seen in Newark Town Hall and Art Gallery.

This picture, *The Lustre Bowl with Green Peas* (1911), was one of the pictures presented when we looked at food in art in July. This painting by Nicholson stimulated my interest in the artist.



Although initially he made his name as a graphic artist, he was also a printmaker, wood-engraver and illustrator. He wrote children's books 'The Pirate Twins' (1929) and 'Clever Bill' (1926) and designed for the theatre. However, he is best known for his paintings of still life, landscapes and portraits. Below are some other examples of his work including one of my favourites, *Miss Jekyll's Gardening Boots* 1920.

Jannet



An Alphabet 1898



Gertrude Jekyll 1920



Miss Jekyll's Gardening Boots 1920



Strollers

This month 14 of us did an easy 1.6 mile walk around Southwell's lanes and footpaths passing The Minster and many beautiful and interesting historic buildings on the way. This month Val kindly stepped in to help because Rosie was on holiday.



The weather had forecast heavy downpours, but we all managed to stay dry and warm the entire walk.

We followed our stroll with lunch at one of the oldest pubs in England, The Saracen's Head. The food and service were good and because we ate there, we all had free parking in their car park at the rear of the pub.

Please note there will be no Strollers in December, but we will be back as usual in January.

Margaret

Threads



Winter, with its long evenings, can be a good time to really get on with crafting projects. Some members of our group are working on seasonal projects to be finished by THAT DATE that is fast approaching, while the rest of us are taking a more relaxed attitude and just carrying on!

Our next meeting is at Beyond Coffee at 2 pm on 4th December.

Advanced notice: we are not meeting in January as the first Thursday is New Year's Day so the first meeting in 2026 will be 5th February.

Barbara

Nature walks

We were fortunate as it stayed dry throughout our Friday morning walk, although the heavy cloud did make viewing difficult due to low light.

A grey heron literally crossed our path!

The section past Collingham Pits was very productive, with lots of ducks (including a very handsome drake Pintail) and a large flock of Lapwing. We also saw our first Greater Black-backed Gull there and two more firsts - an adult Herring gull and two flocks of Golden Plover flying over. We heard a Bullfinch but couldn't see it, which would have been a lovely surprise: they are often heard and not seen. There were a remarkable number of plants still in flower and even new growth of some species, presumably the mild weather the cause of this.



We braved the cold weather at Collingham Pits and Mons Pool in the afternoon on 18th November. We saw our first Goldeneye of the autumn at our first stop, with some very handsome drakes in glistening black and white plumage. We walked a



short distance up the footpath and found a number of interesting plants, with flowering Field Penny-cress (pictured) and the basal leaves of Horseradish being the highlights (for me, anyway). We also managed to add two more species of tree to our plant list, Holly and an Elm.

We walked up the west side of Mons Pool, and climbed the bank to see the Trent at a very high level. The flooded fields and ditches are moving birds around, and we caught up with two Cattle Egrets flying over, as well as some close Wigeon and Gadwall.



Cattle Egret at Mons Pool



High water level of the Trent

But perhaps the highlight was the small Starling murmuration as they settled in the reed-beds during an atmospheric dusk. Our walk back was more urgent than going out, as it had started to rain but we escaped for most of the time.

Robert



Walks

Five members met at the Co-op car park then travelled to the Swanholme pub car park in Lincoln. Led by John Geeson the walk started from the car park then up the path at the side of the river. We then turned right towards Swanholme Lake taking the path around the lake up to the Sports Field and the Meadow.



We then followed the path up to the Hartsholme Visitor Centre, around Hartsholme Lake over the White Bridge and then back down by the river to the car park: 4.5miles.



Computing for Beginners - a short course

2 successful sessions were held this month by David Funchall who offered to assist with any computer operational problems that u3a members may have. All sorts of these were discussed and explained; also, David's one on one tutoring individual concerns were appreciated and enjoyed by all.

We covered many topics, some scheduled, some unscheduled including security, navigating the laptop and Chromebook, connecting your laptop to your mobile phone, saving and storage in the Cloud, Bluetooth, photos, but the main point that David made was 'play with the machine you can't do any damage'.

Two more sessions of up to 6 people are planned for the 9th and 11th December 10.00 -13.00. if you are interested in joining a group, please contact Ivor or Jenny using the Newsletter Editor link on our website, mentioning your particular problems.

Please note - bring your laptop or Chromebook but if you don't have one i.e. using a PC, don't be put off, we have a laptop or two you can use. Unfortunately, at the moment we cannot assist with mobile phones.

The results of these sessions are very encouraging and we foresee more sessions in future as and when David is available.

An important message from Ivor and Jenny Clifford: We found a mobile phone in our car, tucked behind our back seat; can't think who it possibly belongs to after checking possibles. Contact Jenny if you think it might belong to you!

From the Editor: The newsletter this month hints at the rapid approach of the colder winter months and the Christmas festivities. Several groups are planning seasonal celebrations rather than their usual meetings next month, and of course, we have a special Christmas meeting planned for 10th December.

There will be no newsletter in January so make sure that you check out the next newsletter for advance notice of group meetings in 2026!

The next deadline is 6 pm on Friday 19th December, so that the newsletter can be distributed before Christmas.

In the meantime, I am look forward to hearing what Jane Barnes has to tell us about Dairy Farming at our general meeting this Wednesday afternoon... and to buying some of the cheese!

Pat M

