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NEWSLETTER – JULY 2026

From the Chair: Welcome to the July newsletter. Our AGM went off smoothly in June despite the excessive heat. To save everyone from heat stroke, the only refreshments available were iced water in disposable cups, which were gratefully received.

Thankfully, there was a strong breeze that meant that with the windows open and the fans on, we didn't feel overwhelmed by the high temperatures. We'll hope that July doesn't surpass June for heat records as the subject of the talk: important state parades, is enough to make you feel faint just thinking about the uniforms the participants must wear.

We were able to rattle through the agenda for the AGM in time honoured fashion. Plenty of different members proposed or seconded the various motions. In a slight departure from the past, Andrew, our Treasurer, gave a short, verbal report explaining the two financial statements that had been sent out.

Thus, we soon had a new set of officers: the four posts without which we cannot continue as a u3a.

Chair: Chris Stothard

Vice Chair: Rosie Szlumper

Treasurer: Andrew Roberts

Business Secretary: Charlie Stothard

The rest of the committee are: Gill Gillard Membership Secretary, Pat Morgan Newsletter, David Piper Speaker Finder, Robert Carr Minute Secretary and Sonia Brodell (member without portfolio, so up for anything).

Rosie has also agreed to take on the role of Groups Coordinator, so if you are bursting with enthusiasm to set up a new group or there are issues within the group that you need help with, do get in touch with her. She's usually to be found in the kitchen at general meetings but you can email her via the website as well. If you want to speak to someone at a general meeting about particular groups or have questions about groups, Sonia will be by the boards to help.

Thank you all for turning out despite the heat.

Looking forward, we have decided to have another Showcase event next year. We intend it to be on a Saturday so something that the whole village can come to: retired people, almost retired people, sons and daughters of these people, so that everyone knows what an asset we are to people looking for new friends and interests.

We will start planning this in earnest in the autumn, so get your thinking caps on for lots of ideas about what and how to present ourselves to the village.

Try to keep cool and above all keep hydrated, Chris

General Meetings

Our AGM was followed by a talk by Andy from the Lincs and Notts air ambulance. We heard about this organisation at one of our first meetings of our u3a and we were interested to find out what had been happening since then.

Andy made use of videos showing the people involved and the helicopters in action as part of a very informative presentation.



We heard that the service covers a staggering area of 3500 square miles and costs £13 million a year to run, with no government funding involved.

As a charity the service relies on the efforts, ideas and expertise of volunteers who raise both awareness of and funding for their life saving work.

We heard that amazingly the clinical crew offer an enhanced level of pre-hospital critical care including advanced life-saving interventions, either at the site of the emergency or in the helicopter itself.

And as to the future? A second helicopter has been ordered and is currently under construction. The total funding required for this is not yet in place but attendees at the meeting were happy to contribute in some small way to this most worthwhile project.

Andy later informed us that £167.70 had been donated during the meeting.

Speakers Corner

July 22nd **On Parade – State Funerals and Coronations**



A unique insight into how large-scale ceremonial events of recent years were put together by the Principal Director of Music for the Royal Air Force

Presented by Piers Morrell OBE MVO

Coming Soon

August – No Meeting

September – It's Hell on Wheels being a Driving Instructor

October – Re-unification. The most exciting railway project in UK railway preservation

November – The History of Busking and Street Performance

When a speaker has cancelled at short notice, we need a plan B. If you have a presentation which might be suitable for a general audience and are willing to step in at the last minute, please let me know.

dp

Groups

Contacting Group Leaders

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

<https://collingham.u3asite.uk>

Photography

This month the group has been collecting more potential images for a calendar. The hot weather has not helped much.

We are in the holiday season now and members will be taking more images. I have a few tips below that should improve your pictures: -

- Keep verticals upright (i.e. edges of buildings).
- Keep horizontals level (i.e. the sea).
- Remove any distractions before taking your picture.
- It should be obvious what the subject is.
- Try to find lines in the image that draw the viewer to the subject
- It is often better not to place your subject in the centre of the picture.

Paul



Linda's Garden by John Geeson

Maureen's
Garden
by Colin
Smith



Low Street Cottage by
Gill Bass



Family History

At our July meeting we first heard about research carried out by Gill at the request of Jean. Jean had found a record indicating that two of her ancestors had been married in 1810 at what is now Manchester Cathedral. This seemed strange for a family of modest means.

Gill found that at the time it was not the cathedral but it was a Collegiate church, having a college of canons. Anyone marrying in a local parish church had to pay an additional fee to the Collegiate church so many opted to be married there instead to save one fee.

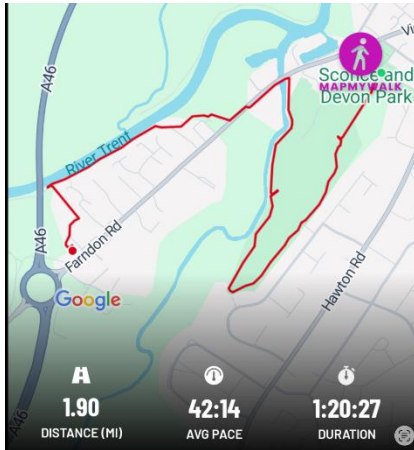
This must have been very common as Gill found from the registers that as many as twenty weddings were held one after the other in one day. It is said that the Rev. Brookes was unconventional, even allowing stand-ins if the groom spent too long at the pub and missed his time slot! Numerous weddings were witnessed by the same people, sometimes a groom from an earlier wedding, and by the end of his tenure he didn't bother with witnesses at all!

The second presentation was by Lesley about her family of photographers. It appears that John Long, born 1855 was the first to choose the profession. being recorded as such in the 1871 census. We presumed that he was learning the trade then as his mother, a widow was receiving parish relief so could not have afforded to buy his equipment. He went on to be very successful and many following family members, both male and female followed his lead. Lesley illustrated her talk with numerous family photos as well as old glass plate negatives showing wonderfully clear images.

Our next meeting is Tuesday 4th August.

Charlie

Strollers



This month 16 Strollers did a 2 mile walk around Queens Sconce followed by a walk along river Trent to The Lord Ted for lunch. The weather was cloudless and scorching hot. To help us with the heat, we started our walk 30 minutes earlier at 10am also offering an option of a shorter 1-mile Sconce circular walk.

Thankfully we finished our walk at The Lord Ted at 11.30 before it got too hot. The pub looked after us very well and all our food came out quickly and was great value for money.



Queens Sconce is an English Civil war Fort constructed in 1644 as part of the Royalist defence works surrounding Newark. There were paths around the park and a shady wooded area running along River Devon.

Following the park, we made our way along Farndon Road for a very short distance, then cut in through Dorner Avenue to the river where we walked on a public path taking us right through lovely and interesting private gardens and their private jetties, along this stretch The Pride of Collingham Crane boat passed us along our way. This was a varied walk enjoyed by all.



Marg and Rosie

Bee by Andrew
Roberts



Weekenders

We held our June meeting at the YCC, and after trying various pubs we feel this will be our new 'home'

It was a much smaller group than usual with many members on holiday, Spain and Canada to mention two places.

3 of our members are joining another u3a for a visit to see the puffins at Bempton Cliffs latter in the month, others are going to Open gardens, something that many of us enjoy throughout the summer months.

The Cat Asylum is open on June 28th and some members are hoping to go. Thank you to David for putting up and taking down the tables in the hall.

Our next meeting is the 3rd Saturday of the month July 18th at the YCC.

Chris D



The Allotments
by Pat Morgan



Choices by Andrew
Roberts

Thursday Talking Shop

At the June meeting we discussed The North-South Divide, starting off with a look at the UK. Whilst our divide is commonly seen as having its origins in the Industrial Revolution there was agreement that history may tell us otherwise. The Romans referred to Britannica Superior (south) and Britannica Inferior (north), and no doubt the Harrying of the North carried out by William the Conqueror after the Norman invasion could have set a long-term view of the divide. There are also wide differences in education attainment, investment, transport and income levels. The Group looked at similar divides - sometimes actually within towns and cities, as well as in other parts of the world, some notable examples being Ireland, Italy and the USA to name but a few.

There will be no meeting in July; too many of us being unavailable over the relevant period. So, we will meet again on Thursday 27th August when we will turn our minds to: 'Sport - Divisive or Unifying?'

Anita

Blue Hydrangea by
Colin Smith



Art Appreciation

Important Information

Members of the Art Appreciation Group enjoy stimulating sessions. Different members offer presentations on many aspects of art. Information about the artists and their work is illustrated by the use of images and other materials for example, items of pottery, needlework or books. These practical examples enhance our learning and appreciation of art in all its forms.

In the light of recent information from the Third Age Trust about copyright, we have decided to change the way in which we report our sessions in the Newsletter. This means that there will be fewer examples of the art work used to illustrate a presentation.

Recent Presentations

South African Beadwork

In May Jenny Clifford talked to us about South African Beadwork. She introduced us to the importance of colour and design as a form of complex communication. She drew our attention to the personal as well as cultural symbolic meaning of particular examples of bead work. Traditional beadwork goes back a long way using porcupine quills, small pieces of iron and polished wood. Glass beads were not introduced until the 1500s.

Many examples of this intricate and colourful beadwork can be seen on the internet.

Russian Art

In June Alexis Waitman introduced us to some Russian artists. Many members of the group knew the work of Wassily Kandinsky and Kazimir Malevich. However, others such as Vladimir Tatlin, Sonia Delaunay and Natalia Goncharova were less well known to most of us. All were working in the early years of the 20th Century during a time of great change in Russia.

Alexis also brought copies of her own books of posters from the Soviet era which offered an interesting and stark contrast to the colourful and experimental work of these artists.

Jannet

Bridge

The Bridge group continues to meet every Friday in Beyond Coffee 2 - 4 pm

Chris D



Moorhen's Nest High and Dry by David Jennings

Nature Walks

There have been no guided walks this month as the regular walkers have been away exploring different habitats in this country, in France or elsewhere. Next month it will be interesting to see how the recent heatwaves have affected the birds and plants in our familiar destinations.



Hay Making Grass by Paul Bass

Threads

The theme for this month is scarves, not that we have needed them in these heatwaves, but we will be prepared for our more normal temperatures when they return.

Two ruffle scarves, one knitted, one crocheted pictured here:



This corner-to-corner crocheted scarf is worked on the diagonal but has straight sides. Using two colours shows the line of work clearly.

The last scarf was inspired by a doll's poncho and a photo of a similar scarf. Needless to say, working without a pattern had its own challenges even for a simple garment. I hope the intended recipient still likes cables!

Only a few of us are available for our normal meeting on the first Thursday in August {6th} but those that can, will still meet at 2 pm at Beyond Coffee.

Barbara



Crescent Moon by David Jennings

Creative Writing

A collaborative piece written by all members of the group - each sentence/short paragraph is written sequentially - and at speed. We had no starting point or subject, just a blank piece of paper.

Starting a new life is terrifying and extremely hard work, - and I think it mirrors a journey into old age.

But walking away from everything that went before is probably even harder.

So how on earth did I get to be here?

Looking down at the dead body at my feet. Do I run away? or stand my ground?

The police will be here anytime soon, and knowing how they operate they will make me culprit number one just because I'm here, but then I don't really have an alibi, and if they find the business records anywhere that will really put the "cat amongst the pigeons".

I am not good at dissembling and my fear is that they will find me out pretty quickly, whatever I say, so I had better give them some partial truths.

The last time I decided to tell (*not quite*) the whole truth it was certainly disastrous and I'm going to need to be better this time-and I think I can hear them arriving!

A bright red stain is seeping out from under the body.

"Cut!" shouts the director.

"OK-lets go back to scene one"

" Places everyone!"

"Bloody hell Sam, I've only just learnt those lines!"

"I know you're a fan of Stanislavski but this is Ealing for god's sake, don't you think?!!"

Alexis, Lesley, Carol, Diane.

The Old Water Mill by John Geeson



Flowers Round the Cross
by Gill Bass



Drawing

We met at Penny's daughter's lovely house for our monthly drawing session, where a variety of objects were tastefully displayed on the kitchen table for us to attempt to draw.

As usual we spent some of our time in total silence as we tried to get to grips with the complexity of the objects, and some of our time chatting about a variety of subjects – “putting the world to rights!” - a really delightful session-thank you to Mia, Penny's daughter for hosting us.

Next time we're back at Sue's lovely house.

Lesley



Blown Away by Pat Morgan

The Way to Nature's Gold

by Paul Bass



Breakfast club

We will be meeting on 27th July at Hexgreave Hall for (hopefully) a superb breakfast.
Read about it in next month's newsletter!

Lesley

News of two groups due to start in October:

Beginner's Ukelele Group

I'm offering a 12-week taster course to members who might be interested in playing.

It will commence, weekly, from Monday 5th October 2 till 3pm.

The venue will be arranged according to numbers as will any venue charges, if applicable.

You do not need to buy an instrument at this point, as I have a number of ukes you can borrow initially. If you can sing along, you will find it helpful, and I try to use music which will be familiar to most.

The sessions should be fun and are aimed at learning 3 or 4 easy chords over the 12 weeks. These chords will then enable you to play a lot of tunes. It's an easy instrument to play but does require regular practise.

Please contact the Group Co-ordinator if you are interested, via the website or at a General Meeting.

Herbs, Plants and Things

This group offers a little insight into an eclectic mix of some of the favourite plants and herbs we enjoy in our gardens and in the food we eat.

Meeting monthly over a six-month period from October, we will explore some of the history of our gardens through shared learning and sample some tasty morsels using some of our discoveries.

Dates and times TBA

If you are interested, please contact the Groups Co-ordinator through the website or at a General Meeting.

And finally:

Latest affordable housing from Gusto?

No, it's an art installation spotted by one of our u3a members!



From the Editor: As I needed to have an earlier deadline than usual, I'm afraid some 'regulars' could not send their contribution in time: the Quiz group July meeting isn't until tomorrow morning! Any missing July news can be included next month!

Some of our members will be busy during August, on holiday or caring for family members, so our usual group schedule may vary and there will be no General Meeting. Next Wednesday's meeting will give us an opportunity to discover how the RAF ceremonial band prepares for major events.

The deadline for items for the next newsletter is **6pm on Friday 21st August**. I no longer send reminders to group leaders, so please submit contributions as soon as they are ready after your meetings and I will save them in my August folder.

Pat M
