

**SCUNTHORPE AND
DISTRICT U3A
NEWSLETTER**
<https://scunthorpe.u3asite.uk>

The cut-off date for the May newsletter is **Wednesday 13th May.**

Contributions as always to:
newseditor@scunthorpeu3a.org

Chair's Comments – Eleanor Wasley

We were delighted to welcome so many new members at the March meeting. The membership desk was busy not only signing up new members but also taking subscriptions ready for the start of our new year on April 1st. Remember if you've not rejoined, you won't be able to attend interest groups or monthly meetings!

At £16 for a year, we think it is really good value. Scunthorpe u3a receives £12 of this sum, which is used to pay speakers, room hire and refreshments for the monthly meetings. The other £4 known as capitation, goes to the u3a. This gives us insurance for all u3a activities, including public liability cover, as well as media licenses allowing us to use different materials and music legally. The u3a also provides guidance and help for individual u3as, as well as producing Third Age Matters Magazine.

The bit which may be of most interest to members is the range of on-line learning events on Zoom throughout the year. This covers everything from mindfulness and meditation to science and history. There's lots more information on their website.

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/educational-events>

They also have a large number of on-line interest groups you can join for an annual fee of £12. There's everything from languages (including Latin), music, gardening, railways, book club and many more. Meetings are again held by Zoom and give the opportunity to meet other u3a members across the UK while discussing topics of mutual interest. There is more information here.

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/learning/interest-groups-online>

One of the things new members always comment on is the welcome they receive. Jenny and the welcome team do a great job and also June and her team in the kitchen. With summer and holidays coming up, both teams are looking for extra helpers. If you are interested and can help with these important jobs, please talk to me at a monthly meeting or contact: chair@scunthorpeu3a.org



Advance Notice – AGM 2026 – Kath Allen

The 2026 AGM will take place at 13.45, before the monthly meeting, on **Friday May 22nd** at St. Paul's Church Hall.

Any proposed motions for consideration at the AGM can be emailed to me or handed to me at the April monthly meeting. Motions must be proposed, seconded and signed accordingly only by fully paid-up Scunthorpe and District u3a members. These must be with me by the April monthly meeting at the latest to be included.

Please consider standing for committee membership. Nomination forms can be obtained from me at the April general meeting. Completed forms must be proposed and seconded by fully paid-up members of Scunthorpe and District u3a (but not existing committee members). Again, completed forms must be with me by the April monthly meeting at the latest to be included.

In April, I will be sending out:

- The agenda for the AGM
- The minutes of last year's AGM
- Trustee's Report
- Financial Report
- Documentation for any AGM business to be discussed.
- A list of those standing for committee membership.

Kath
Secretary

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS 2026

Members are reminded that the ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS for the Scunthorpe & District u3a for 2026 are due on 1st April 2026 but may be paid in advance if desired. The Committee has decided, for this year, the fee will be **£16** (same as last year!). If you are a member of another u3a, then the fee payable will be £12.00. Written confirmation of the additional membership will be required. The £4.00 difference is the Capitation Fee which is remitted to the u3a HQ and which covers, amongst other things, insurance, your membership of the Third Age Trust and the publishing of 'u3a Matters' etc. If you already have an annual subscription to the 'u3a Matters', then I will contact you when you have had your 5 copies posted to you to see if you want to re-subscribe.

If you want to newly subscribe to the magazine 'u3a Matters' then simply add on the £4.20. (See separate explanatory paragraph on 'u3amatters' in January newsletter). So, if a full member makes a payment for £20.20p we would know that they want the magazines as well.

Please note that we use 'e' membership cards now for everyone who has an e mail address. That means I send your membership card mainly as a receipt for your subscription. Some of you know how to store it on your phone to show other people but if you need a physical card, particularly if you don't have an e mail address, then I am always happy to supply you with one.

Ways of paying:

Outside of the monthly meeting

1) Paying by BACS:

PLEASE NOTE THE DETAILS HAVE CHANGED FROM LAST YEAR.

It is a business account not a personal account:

Once the treasurer has confirmed with me your renewed membership (plus optional payment for the magazine) I will e mail you with your 'e card' with your membership number as confirmation for you. This may take a couple of weeks!

2) You can post to Gordon Green (Membership Secretary), and your 2026/27 Membership Card will be e mailed back to you. If you do not have an e mail address then either include a s.a.e for me to send you a membership card or your card will be made available at the next monthly meeting.

- **cheques should be made payable to Scunthorpe & District u3a. Please write the full name of each member (and if possible, with their membership number) on the reverse of the cheque.**

3) Ways of paying at a Monthly meeting

We hope to have the technology, (card reader), from the February meeting to enable members to pay with debit/credit card. May take some time, so please forgive any queues! This, along with paying by BACS is the preferred way of paying.

Alternatively, make a cheque out (as in the above paragraph) or put cash in a sealed envelope with all your details on the envelope and put it in the collecting box and I will send your 'e' membership card within a few days.

If anyone has changed any contact details, including e mail addresses, please let Gordon Green know so that accurate records can be maintained.

Finally, it would be really helpful if any member who does not wish to re-subscribe for next year could let Gordon know. It saves Gordon having to contact you!

Last orders for membership subscription fees for 2026/27

As you probably know the membership fees go from April 1st until, March 31st. Out of a total membership of about 250 members 180 had paid by the due date. That leaves about 70 members who have not said anything to the membership secretary about their future intentions.

If you are one of these 80 members it would be most helpful if you could tell me what your intentions are within the week. If you do not contact me, then I will try to contact you so that we can confirm our secure numbers by the time of our Annual General Meeting in May.

Just an e mail will suffice! If you are leaving it would be most helpful to know a general reason why.

Thankyou

Gordon Green
Membership Secretary

Would you like to join the Committee?

Do you value Scunthorpe u3a, everything it does, coming to meetings and the different interest groups? Do you want to see it continue to grow and prosper? We are looking for new members to join the committee.

The committee meets monthly on the 2nd Wednesday of the month in the morning and meetings last about two hours.

Known as trustees, we are responsible for the smooth running of Scunthorpe u3a, monitoring finance, membership and setting subscription fees as well as organising the AGM, meetings and events.

It is an opportunity to become more involved in the running and organisation of the u3a and shaping its future.

Everyone is familiar with the WW1 advertising poster of Lord Kitchener and the slogan "Your Country Needs You."

We can adapt that to Scunthorpe u3a Needs You.

Without the volunteers to join the committee, Scunthorpe u3a would not be able to run or function. No one wants that.

Everyone has different skills and perspectives they could offer.

Talk to any of the committee about becoming a committee member – new people bring new ideas and enthusiasm which are needed to keep us vibrant and relevant.

Seriously think about filling in a nomination form which will be included in the March and April newsletters. If unsure, you can come along as an observer for 2 or 3 meetings to see what we do before being co-opted as a committee member.



Can you help?

With the start of the summer and holidays, we need some more helpers in the welcome team and also the kitchen.

If you would like to join either team, please can you talk to Jenny B (Welcome) or June (Kitchen) at a monthly meeting.

Alternatively get in touch with Eleanor, either at a monthly meeting or email.

A Day Trip to BUXTON

The Social Trip to Buxton on 4th July is now fully booked. If you would like to put your name on a reserve list, please contact: Pam Murphy Trip organiser. Or Treasurer David Holmes.

10th Anniversary Celebration Buffet

A couple of videos were put on YouTube of the 10th anniversary celebrations. The short video of folk dancing was viewed 44 times with some viewing it more than once. The slide show was viewed 55 times with some folk not viewing to the end. It was an exercise worth doing and I hope those that took the opportunity to engage with YouTube enjoyed what they saw.

It's interesting to note that 25% of members viewed the slide show and 20% the short video.

Speaker Review – Judith Proctor

Friday 27th March 2026

A programme of medieval music and songs from Spain played and sung by de Mowbray's Musicke was enjoyed by a large audience including 10 new members to the Scunthorpe u3a. This was Peter Barnard and Kate Billmore's second visit to the group and they entertained in full medieval costumes. The performance started with a loud "Trumpet Fanfare" down the hall with a bagpipe (without a drone) and drum commonly known as a nakers which caused much amusement.

Peter and Kate guided us through a programme of 15 songs and music which they sang in Latin, a Portuguese dialect and Spanish, such as the Pilgrim Song (Dum Pater Familias). Towards the end of the programme the music and songs became lighter with a drinking song (Oy Comamos y Bebamas) meaning let's eat and drink for tomorrow we shall fast; and a Christmas Song "Cuncti Simus Concanentes" with the audience joining in the Ave Marias. The songs and music were from 12th, 13th, 14th and 15th centuries. Some of the songs had stories attached such as a song honouring St James the patron saint of pilgrims and soldiers among other things. Some of the songs were informative such as telling the pilgrims what they will need on pilgrimage. Others were religious in nature or loud and used on the battlefields to frighten the enemy (at that time the Saracens). In 1280 Alfonso, King of Spain commissioned songs about the Virgin Mary. Peter gave a brief history of Spain where at this point in time Christians/Jews and Arabs were living in harmony.



Many of the instruments they played have Middle Eastern origins. The bagpipe having come to England in 1288 in the reign of Edward 1. There is information on de Mowbray's Musicke website about the instruments used and members were able to have a closer look after the performance. Kate played a Portative Organ and English bagpipes and Peter a reeded and mellow sounding instrument (a Shawm) among others.

This was an enjoyable and informative afternoon of music, songs and history. Anyone wishing to find out more about the duo can look at their website www.demowbray.info or see them perform again at Kirton Lindsey Church on 23rd May 2026 or at Worcester Cathedral on 26th September 2026. Look on line for details.

Speaker Secretary – Pat Ackland

Our speaker at our meeting on April 24th will be a new person, Peter Mathers. He has a list of talks but I have chosen Municipal Marvels.

This talk describes the history, development and uncertain future of the public civic park, right back from its Victorian beginnings to the present day. Including such places as the Valley Gardens in Harrogate and Pearson Park in Hull (learning of the rise and fall of Mr. Pearson), but starting with the world's first public park. Where that can be found may be something of a surprise!

Our next meeting on 22nd May is our AGM. As usual, I have booked a charity speaker for this meeting. Ruth Taylor is a representative of the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust and she will be telling us about the Donna Nook & the Grey Seal Colony there. Hope you enjoy both!!

SPEAKERS BOOKED FOR 2026

26th June, Mark Jessop, “Weather Folklore”.

Traditional forecasting sayings. Origins. What might work and what shouldn't.

24th July, Joy Wood, “From Bedpan to Pen”.

Joy's talk covers her transition from nurse to best-selling author. Comes highly recommended.

28th August, Tony Perkins, “A Medieval Pilgrimage”

A pilgrimage was not possible for everyone and for those who did go it was often a once in a lifetime event. I speak on the who? What sort of people would go on pilgrimage?

The where? What destinations were open to a medieval pilgrim?

The why? What prompted people to make often quite hazardous journeys?

The how? What methods would be used to reach their Holy destination?

I demonstrate the clothes of the period and items often carried by a pilgrim.

25th September, Malcolm Johnson, “The Headscarf Heroes”.

Hull 1968 - the triple trawler disaster and the fight of "The Headscarf Heroes"

23rd October, Horace Liberty, “London Statues”.

An illustrated talk about the sometime funny stories behind well-known public sculptures in London.

27th November, “The Sealed Knot Society”.

Members of this Civil war group will demonstrate some of the weapons used and tell us a bit of the history of the Civil war.

11th December, Catherine Terry, “A Life Treading the Boards”.

An Autobiographical Presentation of Life in Showbiz! All you every wanted to know about Showbusiness... and some of the things you didn't want to know too! Hear about the glitz, the glamour, and the realities, and spot the famous faces of Showbiz Royalty. From BBC Sitcoms to Shakespeare, West End Musicals, TV film sets to Cruises, we take a highly entertaining journey through Catherine's showbiz career, as she draws us into her world of Theatre and TV. Accompanied by photographs, video footage and anecdotes, this truly is a 'A Life Treading the Boards'.

Around the Groups

Archery / Air Rifle Shooting – Chris Farrow

The Archery and Air Rifle Group meets every second Thursday of the month from 11am to 1pm at Trackside Archery and Shooting Club at North Kelsey Moor, near Brigg. The members who attend often split the session between archery and rifle shooting. The charge for the session is £12 which includes the hire of club equipment.

The next meeting will be held on **Thursday, 14th May**, 11am to 1pm. Please come and join us, it's great fun! Contact Chris Farrow.

Beginners' Family History – Kath Allen

The group continues to meet at the Bowl's Club on the first Tuesday of each month. This month we looked at good sources for family historians which are free to access and where detailed information can be found and often downloaded with no charge. There is plenty of room for anyone who would like to join us. Part of each session is usually spent looking at a specific problem that a member brings along.

Kath Allen

Please contact Kath Allen if you would like to join us.

Book Group – Sonia Czabaniuk

Well, the group is on a roll with its choice of reading material! When we convened in the usual place at the usual time and, after we welcomed our new member, Tricia, the discussion began about the March book – A Dangerous Fortune by Ken Follett. Although not a 'five stars read,' it certainly got more 'thumbs ups' rather than 'thumbs down.' Set in the 1860's, it is a family saga with the backdrop of banking and finance. Murder mystery, rags to riches, lost fortunes, snobbery, and lost loves – it has it all. (It was also a little racy in places 😊) We all agreed it was an easy read. Some really enjoyed it, others didn't feel it was one of Follett's best and one member found the subject matter an issue. Overall, though, a recommended read.

On to the books the group have been enjoying over the weeks since we last met. These ranged from Robert Peston's novel, The Crash, through to a Japanese translation Letters from The Ginza Shihodo Stationery Shop by Kenzi Ueda (a very gentle, feel-good read) via Trevor McDonald and Melvyn Bragg.

The book for this month is a change of pace again – 'Not From Around Here - Memoir of a Soft Southerner' by Bradley Chermiside.

Next meeting is 23rd April 2026, 10.30 at The Arc (membership full – sorry)

If any u3a members would like a list of the recommended reads from 2025-2026, please email and I will send it out to you.

A bit better than Beginners' French – Pat Ackland

We have retitled the Beginners' French group to 'A bit better than beginners' French group.

As this group has been together for some time, we have progressed from raw beginners to people with some knowledge of the basics and the ability to make sentences, quite an achievement! Most of the members learnt French at school and thought they had forgotten everything but we're getting it back. It is a well-known fact that learning a language is very good for your mental well-being. This group is welcoming and very friendly so why not give it a go?

The next meeting is on Monday 18th May 10am at Scawby Village Hall.

If you are interested, please contact Pat Ackland

Card & Board Games Group – Rosemary Barratt

The group continue to meet weekly and are reasonably settled at the Anchor (Beefeater) between 1pm and 3pm. Some members have also met for lunch before the meeting.

Last month we welcomed a new member and numbers at each meeting have been between 10 and 15 members. As well as playing the usual games of Chinese Rummy, Canasta and Crown 5, we have also played Nomination Whist.

Rosemary Barratt Convenor.

Coffee and Chat – Margaret Lambert

Once again, a lovely morning at 20/21 Visual Arts Centre in Scunthorpe, a very good attendance and we were well looked after by Caroline the Manageress who baked some delicious scones which many of us sampled and enjoyed with our coffee. Lots to talk about, as we had a month's news to catch up on from us all and of course some laughing as well.

Our next coffee morning will be at Brigg Garden Centre in the cafe upstairs at 10-30am 8th May, look forward to seeing you all.

12th June - Morrisons Scunthorpe
10th July - Kirton Garden Centre
14th August - Lindsey Lodge Hospice Scunthorpe
11th September - Angel Hotel Brigg

Contact is Margaret Lambert.

Craft Group – Sandra Kirkby

The craft group meets at the Bowls Club on the 2nd Wednesday of the month from 2pm to 4 pm. The next meeting will be on Wednesday 13th May.

Group members bring their own projects to work on, and endeavour to help one another if necessary. Activities can include knitting, crochet, tapestry, and cross stitch to name but a few. Please contact Sandra Kirkby.

Gardening Group – Jenny Winterburn

The gardening group has a speaker this month. Celia Lord will give us an illustrated talk entitled “In an English County Garden”. It should be very interesting.

The meeting is at the bowls club on Tuesday 28 April at 2pm.
Jenny

iPad and Tablet group – David Holmes

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 12th May 2026, 10am to 12noon at Oasis Community Space (formerly Crosby Collective Cafe), Ferry Road, Scunthorpe, DN15 8LG.

New members are most welcome to join our group to discover how their iPad, Tablet, Smartphone and Laptop works and have fun discovering how. Let us help you to sort out any problems you may have with your Digital Devices, or problems understanding how the Internet works and using more.

If you cannot make it to this meeting, please contact David on his mobile or email.

David Holmes, Group Leader.

History Group - Pat Ackland

We have reached Oliver Cromwell and the Commonwealth - Britain's only and not very successful experiment at being a Republic. Cromwell is a character we've all heard about, but most of us don't know much about him - apart from what Charles II and the Stuart monarchy wanted us to know... As we discovered there was a lot more to the man than the two very polarised views of a ruthless military dictator or else a champion of parliamentary democracy.

Oliver Cromwell was a reasonably wealthy landowner who was a Member of Parliament. He had a strong puritan upbringing with a strict moral code and belief in a simple form of worship. He also had a strong belief in divine providence.

If it hadn't been for the Civil War, we might never have heard of him.... He rose to prominence in leading and shaping the New Model Army making it a professional, highly trained and disciplined fighting force, with promotion based on ability rather than social status. Not only did it comprehensively defeat the Royalist army, it was also the forerunner of the modern British Army.

Cromwell had initially been unwilling to contemplate or support the deposition of Charles I and had been keen to reach an acceptable religious and political settlement to the 'problem' of the king. However, he increasingly became convinced that Charles was an 'obstinate man whose heart God had hardened'. He interpreted the victories of the Model Army as a sign of God's approval of their cause. Not only was the king 'a man of blood' he was responsible for the unnecessary bloodshed of the Civil War and peace would be impossible while he was still alive. Charles was an 'incorrigible tyrant who could not be trusted'. Divine justice demanded the king be put on trial and Cromwell was a signatory on his death warrant.

The Commonwealth that followed was a turbulent time with in-fighting, lack of agreement and brutal campaigns in Ireland and Scotland. Only the strong personality of Cromwell held it together. After his death in 1658, no other leader emerged and the country was keen to welcome back Charles II as king.

Cromwell was buried with great ceremony in Westminster Abbey. However, his body was exhumed in 1661 and given a posthumous execution before being hung in chains. His head was cut off and displayed on the roof of Westminster Hall until 1684. His vault was used as the burial place of Charles II's illegitimate descendants.

Cromwell played a pivotal role in British history and in shaping modern Britain. After debate we decided to award him 8 out of 10.

Local History - Eleanor Wasley

Twelve of us met in Brigg on a cold afternoon to go for a walk around the town led by local geologist Paul Hildreth, looking at the different materials used in the buildings.



Brigg is built on clay and there is no local building stone, so most buildings are brick. The local clay produced pale yellow bricks. That from the brickworks near Crowle produced a red brick. Only the most important and impressive buildings were built from stone. This had to be imported either by water or rail, so was expensive.

The most commonly used stones were sandstone or limestone. Sandstone is a sedimentary and recognisable by its layers of sediment. Apparently, it is important these are laid the 'right' way up. Limestone is recognisable by the presence of fossils. And then there is the 'streaky bacon' limestone with its bands of pale and pinkish brown. The best limestone comes from Ancaster near Grantham and this was used to build the war memorial.



We finished admiring the facing of Lavasite on the walls of Morrisons on Wrawby Street. This is a granite which is only found in Norway or Canada and was very popular in the 1970s. The crystals in it seem to change colour if you look at them from different angles.

This was a fascinating visit, making us look at the buildings in a completely different light.

Cemeteries are also another good place to find a wide range of different stones and we will be taking up Paul's offer at a later date of a guided trip around Brigg Cemetery to look at the different grave stones.

Lunch Group – Ann Owen

SCUNTHORPE u3a BLUE LUNCHEON GROUP

Our next venue will be at

THE SHIRES

Gainsborough Road West
Kirton in Lindsey DMN21 4JL

Wednesday 27th May 2026 (Blue Group)

Eating at 12.30pm.

Murder Mystery Group – Wendy England

It was Murder in the Crypt this month, set in the ancient parish church of St Jude. The year is 1924 and the shadow of the Great War still lies heavy over the village.

It is a wild and stormy night when the body of the choir master is discovered murdered by the organ. He was an unpleasant character, cantankerous and sharp tongued. He was generally disliked as he revelled in knowing everyone's secrets - and there were many of them.

Andrew had written the plot using Chat GDP and was trialling it on the group. The final solution was by majority vote as to who had the best motive for the murder... Next meeting Saturday 16th May at St Paul's small hall.

Play Reading – Robin Poole

At the April meeting we finished off "Kind Hearts and Coronets" by Robert Hamer and John Deighton.

The next meeting is on Wednesday 13th May at St Paul's small hall. For more details contact Robin.

Science and Technology Group – Alan Keen

It was another interesting afternoon. Driverless cars have been in the news recently as they could be appearing on British Roads this summer. A public consultation has been asking road users, industry and disability groups to help shape the framework to ensure self-driving technology is safely introduced on British Roads.

Waymo is already operating in several US states. Baidu is operating in major Chinese cities and Abu Dhabi became the first city in the Middle East to introduce driverless cars last November. A lively discussion followed after watching videos produced by Waymo extolling the virtues of driverless cars...

We then moved onto Elon Musk and his ambitious plan to establish a self-sustaining city on Mars with the ambition of having 1 million people living on Mars by 2050. This will be achieved by sending robots to build a space centre on Mars that will provide a suitable environment for humans before they arrive. The exact costs are unknown but likely to run into the trillions of dollars.

His ideas and plans have already been described a 'bunkum' by astrophysicists and a notable quote from his video promoting his ideas to Space X personnel, was "we'll solve that problem later". Unsurprisingly none of us felt encouraged to add our names to his project and decided the money could be better spent on solving some of the environmental issues facing this planet.

We finished with a look at the Columbian Exchange of 1492, which refers to the massive and historic transfer of plants, animals, diseases, culture, human population and technology between the Old and New Worlds following the arrival of Christopher Columbus and the Spaniards in South America. It has been described as one of the most significant environmental events in human history.

The exchange revolutionised European diets with the introduction of potatoes, maize, cacao and tomatoes. In exchange, the Americas were given wheat, barley, rice and sugar cane. The introduction of horses, cattle, pigs and sheep to the Americas fundamentally changed indigenous cultures and land use.

However perhaps the most devastating effect was the introduction of old-world diseases to which the native population had no natural immunity. It is estimated that up to 95% of the indigenous population were affected leading to widespread depopulation, and the collapse of society, political structures and culture. In exchange, Europe got syphilis.

Following depopulation, many areas reverted back to forest and the removal of large amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere resulted in the 'Little Ice Age of the 1500s and 1600s. All good stuff!

Quiz Group – Andrew Bullen

Fifteen of us, including three new members, fortified with bacon butties and home-made cakes from St Paul's Cafe, settled down to another entertaining and lively quiz session.

As well as the general knowledge questions, there were more specific rounds on models of cars from the 1960s (many of which we remembered and had driven) and old TV programmes which had us delving into the depths of memory to remember the answers. The round on different 'ologies' stumped us though, especially when it came to Tartarology (study of hell and the underworld). Odonatology (dragonflies) also fooled us as we muddled it up with odontology (teeth)...

All good fun and we always come home having learned many new bits of information.

Next meeting 10am Thursday 7th May at St Paul's Small Hall.

Scrabble Group – Wendy England

The next Scrabble Group meeting will be **Wednesday 6th May** at the Beefeater Anchor pub. If anyone would like to have lunch before attacking the Scrabble board, you will be most welcome to come for **1pm**. Action will begin at **2pm**. Although this is primarily a Scrabble Group, we are always open to other games, such as Rummikub or cards if any of our members fancies a change. I shall be bringing Rummikub so if anyone would like a game, or to learn, they would be most welcome.

Please come and join our very friendly group and discover some new words – and possibly new friends! This is a North Lindsey u3a group open to Scunthorpe members.

Wendy England.

WhatsApp Group – David Holmes

This group is designed to help members keep in touch and is particularly useful for people to arrange to meet up for coffee, walks etc. If you want your name added to the group, please contact David Holmes by email with your name and telephone number so he can add your name.

Remember you need a smartphone to be able to use this app. Please only download the app from Apple Store or Google play, as other sites may not be secure.