

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

The cut-off date for contributions to the June newsletter is **Wednesday 17th June.**

Contributions as always to:
newseditor@scunthorpeu3a.org

Chair's Comments – Eleanor Wasley

May is our AGM, a time to look back over the last year and look forward to the next. It is part of our accountability to you. It has been an eventful and happy year with our tenth-year birthday celebrations last September and the celebratory buffet in January. We need 20% of our members to be quorate - on present numbers that means 40 people at the meeting. **Also note the monthly meeting will start earlier than usual at 2pm so don't be late! Refreshments will be available from 1.20 - 1.45.**

All the paperwork was circulated at the beginning of the month so please do read it before you come as I don't intend to read out the minutes or Trustee's report at the meeting. We have all attended some AGMs that seem to last for ages and everyone is bored stiff. We don't want that, as we have an interesting speaker ready to entertain us when we finish.

Ruth Taylor from the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust is going to talk about Donna Nook and the seal colony. She will be bringing a collecting tin so please support this worthwhile cause.

We are still looking for volunteers to join the welcome team and in the kitchen. The warm welcome and drink is much appreciated by everyone who comes to the meetings. Please do think seriously about helping in either of these important roles. Many hands really do help spread the load and we can arrange a rota if you are only able to help some months but not others. Don't rely on someone else volunteering - they may not! I'm sure we've all heard the classic poem by Charles R Swindoll...

*There was an important job to be done and Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it
Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it.
Somebody got angry about that because it was Everybody's job.
Everybody thought that Anybody could do it, but Nobody realised that
Everybody wouldn't do it.
It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what
Anybody could have done.*

Don't let that happen - or maybe I need to hand out a few Round Tuit coins? If you don't know what I'm talking about, have a read here...

www.quantumenterprises.co.uk/roundtuit/help.htm

Advance Notice AGM 2026

The 2026 Annual General Meeting will take place at 2pm, before the monthly meeting, on **Friday May 22nd** at St. Paul's Church Hall. Refreshments will be served from 1.20pm until 1.45pm

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.

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 by email

Speaker Review – Judith Proctor

The audience at the April u3a meeting was transported on a journey around England and briefly to New York when Peter Mathers was the guest speaker, entertaining us with a talk on “Municipal Marvels” – the rise and fall of public parks. He spoke about the history and development of the public park starting with his own experience in Bradford where his parents ran a corner shop which had only a back yard so a trip to the local park was a means of seeing some greenery and in the autumn, he enjoyed jumping into large piles of crunchy autumn leaves there.

All towns have large parks which are free to enter and provide amenities and health benefits to residents often to people who do not have access to a garden. The first public park in the world was opened in 1847, in Victorian times, in Birkenhead after a large explosion of population in the Industrial Revolution. This was considered Victorian one up man ship by the Local Authority and so was followed closely by a new public park in Liverpool. Sefton Park was designed by the gardener at Chatsworth House, Joseph Paxton, who also rescued the Great Exhibition. He was paid £800 (equivalent of £65,000 today) to design Sefton Park and this became the template for many future designs and parks. Frederick Law Olmstead visited for ideas, and he went on to design Central Park in New York.

The public park in York is a microcosm of the history of Roman and Ecclesiastical York, being run initially by the Yorkshire Philosophical Society until 1961 when it became the property of the citizens of York. Known as the Museum Gardens they were laid out in the mid-19th Century with year-round interest and a philosophical and scientific bias, with an accurate time clock.

Peter related information about more local parks such as Pocklington’s Burnby Hall Gardens and the water lilies collected by Major Percy Stewart and planted on 2 artificial lakes. Hull has 2 public parks - Pearson Park with its connection to Philip Larkin the poet who had a flat overlooking the park. This park opened in August 1860 and had 30,000 visitors on the first day. Money to build this park was donated by an entrepreneur, Zachariah Charles Pearson an importer of cotton, who was a Councillor and Lord Mayor. The second park was Queens Gardens built in 1930 which houses a statue of Sir William Wilberforce.

In 1934 Sewerby Hall was sold to the corporation and the gardens re-opened by Amy Johnson in 1936 with many specimen trees, a walled garden and typical local authority planting in blocks. Holland Park in London, privately owned initially but in the 1950s was sold to London County Council and has an impressive display of dahlias imported from Spain and a Japanese Garden looking more naturalistic. Spa towns are linked to beautiful public gardens as are the gardens in Harrogate. Something different was the 1993 linear park in Paris echoed by the second one built on an old railway line in New York. The third linear park was built in Manchester, the Castlefield Viaduct owned by the National Trust, where a wildlife garden is being developed and measures 330 metres long costing £2.4m.

This talk evolved into a really interesting afternoon’s entertainment with lots of ideas for people to visit during the warm summer months.

Speaker Secretary – Pat Ackland

For the meeting on May 22nd, I have booked Ruth Taylor who is representing the Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.

Ruth will talk to us about Donna Nook and the Grey seal colony there.

I have asked Ruth to bring a collecting box as I know you will all want to support this local charity who do so much good work.

Our June meeting is on Friday 26th. For this meeting, I have booked a new speaker Mark Jessop who will talk to us about Weather Folklore. This should be interesting and entertaining.

SPEAKERS BOOKED FOR 2026

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’.

Recycle

Recycling boxes are still available in the small Hall for you to deposit any unwanted electronic cables, phone chargers, spent batteries etc.

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, 11th June**, 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.

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

Book Group – Sonia Czabaniuk

Another month over, another pile of books read and waiting to be read. This is proving to be a prolific year for our readers. First things, first. A critique of the book chosen last month. 'Not from Around Here' by Bradley Chermiside. Subtitled – 'Memoirs of a Soft Southerner Up North'. I think the title says it all, but what did our group think of it? The consensus of opinion was that it was an 'easy read' which was amusing to begin with but soon became a little (dare I use the terms?) boring and contrived. It was also difficult to identify with the protagonist if you do not identify as either North or South. Many of the group are southern or Midlands born and found it difficult to sympathise. This is autobiographical and based on the 'other side of the Pennines' i.e. Bolton which also added another layer. So, not particularly recommended.

On to more interesting topics. What have the group been reading? Once again, this was a mixture of previous recommendations, returns to old favourites (to see if they still are) and new suggestions. These ranged from Alice Roberts 'Incredible Unlikelihood of Being' which is a fascinating insight into evolution, through to 'When the Cranes Fly South' by Lisa Ridzen which deals with the subject of end of life. Mixed in between these two extremes were the usual crime thrillers, gothic tales and even a 'who knows what it was about?' (David Mitchell – not the comedian – 'Cloud Atlas'). So, a busy month for all.

The book for this month is 'The Crash' by Robert Peston – a political thriller set in the banking crash of 2008. Next meeting 28 May 2026, 10.30 at The Arc (group full). Keep reading!

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 15th June 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 at The Anchor (Beefeater) on Thursdays from 1 pm to 3 pm. However, we will be moving and are currently looking for a new venue.

We continue to play Chinese Rummy, Canasta and Crown 5 with the occasional Rumikub. New games are sometimes tried but, so far none have become favourites.

Rosemary Barratt, Convenor

Coffee and Chat – Margaret Lambert

Another good coffee morning at Brigg Garden Centre in May, a little far out for some but a nice turn out. The friendship is definitely taking place with us all, we all want to know what we've been up to during the last month and those who are not there I make inquires to see if they are OK. I hope to see you all at Morrisons in Scunthorpe in June.

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 10th June.

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 if you are interested.

Gardening Group – Jenny Winterburn

Last month the group had an excellent talk by Celia Lord, who lives near Gainsborough. She started off with a history of gardening from Greek and Roman times to the present day, via cottage gardens and Capability Brown. Then she moved on to a gardening adventure of her own.

In 2021 she and her husband decided to see if they could visit 21 gardens in the year. The previous year had not been much fun and that year wasn't good for travelling abroad. They went around England from Cornwall to Northumberland to inspiring gardens. The weather was good and they took many photos. They did the 21 gardens, and all the members of the group now have a list of the gardens that were visited. I expect many of them will be getting in their cars to have an adventure of their own.

May's outing will be to Hall Farm Gardens at Harpswell on 26th of May.

History Group - Pat Ackland

We had a month off in April as Philip Ashe came to talk about 'The Early Stuarts - and how to squander a kingdom'. It was a highly entertaining and very irreverent look at James I and VI, and Charles I, focusing on missed opportunities, poor decision-making and political missteps. Philip described Scotland as a 'base barbarous and bankrupt state on the edges of civilisation'...

James arrived in England in 1603 to a nation still basking in the glory of the Elizabethan reign. It was a secure and prosperous country with a cultured population where the arts and science flourished. It had a strong government, respect (and almost devotion to the monarchy) and an established and settled church.

James was initially welcomed with open arms and the failure of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605 further increased his popularity. However, he was completely different from Elizabeth I, especially when it came to his morals and behaviour. He quickly managed to alienate the English nobility. Key roles were filled with his Scottish nobles who controlled access to the King, patronages and policy. Male favourites including George Villiers didn't help. There was vice and corruption in high places and recurring scandals as well as suppression of any publications he didn't approve of...He had a seemingly uncanny knack of knowing how to upset the English...

Matters were even worse under Charles I with an increasing breakdown between King and Parliament. The law was no longer guaranteeing life or property. Control of the seas and influence in Europe were lost. Barbary pirates were attacking the SW and the Scots had advanced into Northumberland. His stubborn belief in the Divine Right of the King alienated all. His increasing need for money led to the selling of honours to anyone willing to pay and the fining of anyone who had the temerity to decline it. Consensus of church worship was lost with Charles increasingly wanting to move closer to Rome.

The population increasingly felt the country was going to the dogs. Supremacy, and credibility were lost and it was going bankrupt. (Charles had even tried to get the Pope to give him money...) Civil War was almost inevitable.

Although the Parliamentary leaders tried to reach a compromise with Charles (with conditions very favourable to him), he regarded this as a sign of weakness by the Parliamentarians and an acknowledgement they couldn't manage without him. He effectively signed his own death warrant.

Under the Commonwealth, the relationship between government and the people was re-established with the importance of democracy, personal rights and freedoms accepted. England began to prosper again. Two swift and bloody campaigns sorted out the perennial problem of the Scots and Irish. There was a massive ship building programme and England once again established her dominance as a trading nation.

By 1660, England contained all the elements of a modern democracy and political country many, many years before elsewhere in Europe. None of this would have happened if it hadn't been for James and Charles!

We felt there were definite parallels to what is happening today and perhaps some modern politicians and leaders could benefit from listening to the talk? We are hoping to welcome Philip back again in future with his take on some of the other more controversial English monarchs.

Local History - Eleanor Wasley

We're going to the Zoo, zoo, zoo How about you, you, you, you can come too, too, too.

April's trip was to Messingham Zoo. It was a glorious sunny day and there was a definite Sunday School atmosphere to the trip and we all had great fun. We were taken round by one of the staff who talked about the different animals.



We had chance to stroke one of the skunks and hand feed the emus and lemurs. None of us realised just how many different animals there were - everything from an armadillo to wallabies with prairie dogs, meerkats, emu, racoons, foxes, lemurs, otters and even a giant tortoise. Only the barn owl refused to come out for us!

Most of the animals have arrived as unwanted pets. Others have been given by other zoos.

The animals are all well loved now and cared for. None of them would survive in the wild. It was a very different experience to zoo visits when I was little and magnificent animals like lions and tigers were kept in small sterile cages with concrete floors...



iPad and Tablet group – David Holmes

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 9th June 2026, time 10am to 12pm at Oasis Community Space Cafe, Ferry Road, Scunthorpe, DN15 8LG.

New members are most welcome to join our group to discover how their I pad, Tablet, Smartphone and Laptop work and have fun doing it.

Let us help you to sort out any problems you may have with your Digital Devices or problems understanding how the internet works on these devices.

If you cannot make it to this meeting, please let me know.

David Holmes, Group Leader.

Lunch Group – Ann Owen

SCUNTHORPE u3a BLUE LUNCHEON GROUP

Our next venue will be at

BLACK HORSE INN

HIGH STREET, BLYTON
DN21 3JX

Wednesday 24th June 2026 (Blue Group)

Eating at 12.30pm.

Murder Mystery Group – Wendy England

It was another good session featuring a story entitled The Last Stop, set on a lonely rural railway station on a cold windy and rainy evening. Passengers are waiting for the last train which is late. A body is found at the end of the station - dead... murdered. He was well known to all the passengers and each of them had their own motive (in fact many motives) for murder.... But who did it?

Next meeting is Saturday 20th June 2pm until 4pm.

Play Reading – Robin Poole

This month's play was "Funny Money" by Ray Cooney a comedy farce of epic proportions. We will finish this play at the next meeting on 8th July. No meeting in June due to holidays.

Science and Technology Group – Alan Keen

Ten of us met for the April meeting and welcomed a new member too.

It was another lively session covering a range of very different topics. Alan has been experimenting with the Notebook LM which is a new AI research tool from Google. It is supposed to be better than the other AI chat bots as it "focuses exclusively on the sources you provide, ensuring answers are reliable and cited." It can be used to provide infographics, slides and videos. Alan had used it to research the new bin recycling arrangements in North Lincolnshire looking at how the waste from the burgundy bins is separated and recycled and what happens to the brown bin waste.

It is 40 years since the catastrophic explosion in Reactor 4 at Chernobyl and the creation of a radioactive exclusion zone. Eleanor talked about how wildlife was returning to the area and thriving with the lack of human interference. Wolves, lynx, bison and bears have returned and numbers are markedly higher than in the surrounding non-contaminated areas. Perhaps the most interesting discovery is of a fungus *Cladosporium sphaerospermum* which thrives in the presence of high levels of ionising radiation and actively grows to the source of the radiation using it as an energy source for growth. This has implications not only for cleaning up radioactive surfaces but also in blocking or deflecting cosmic ionising radiation in space.

Gordon had a short video produced by Nottingham University about Arsenic and its properties and its poisonous side effects. This included a story of a Bradford sweet maker who had mistakenly added it to sugar resulting in the deaths of 20 people. The full story can be read here.

<https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/Dying-for-Humbug-the-Bradford-Sweets-Poisoning-1858/>

Alan had a couple of short inputs about recent improvements to flood defences in Hull and how ice is prepared to give the perfect surface for the different events during the Winter Olympics. It was a lot more complicated than any of us realised involving many different layers.

Eleanor finished with the reminder that April 5th was National Dandelion Day and the importance of dandelion flowers as a source of pollen and nectar for more than 200 species of pollinating insects at a time when other food resources are scarce. We need to love our dandelions!

Quiz Group – Andrew Bullen

With only nine members this month, we got through the questions in record time, even though Andrew gave us two rounds on Lincolnshire.

It was the usual mix of questions including general knowledge, acronyms (we all know them, but do we actually know what those letters stand for?), 1970s, old advert slogans (many we had forgotten), sweets, books and old May Day customs.

A good time was had by all. New members always welcome.

Next meeting Thursday 4th June at St Paul's small hall 10am until noon.

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 **1.15pm**. 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 now a joint group with North Lindsey u3a.

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.