

July 2026

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

The cut-off date for contributions to the August newsletter is **Wednesday 19th August.**

Contributions as always to:
newseditor@scunthorpeu3a.org

Chair's Comments – Eleanor Wasley

The good news is the Qi Gong Group is restarting in September. Mel was delighted with the positive response to his article in the newsletter and follow up email. As well as several past members, many new people have expressed an interest in joining the group. There's still time to contact Mel and add your name to the list!

I attended a meeting of interest group co-ordinators earlier this month and it was good to see so many there and find out what is happening in the groups. Art Appreciation and the Book Club are very popular and both have waiting lists. There is definitely the potential for another group of each - as long as someone is prepared to lead it! Help and support is available.

One subject raised by several group leaders was people not responding to emails. Please help by sending a reply - it is much easier to do this straight away rather than leaving it and forgetting! Also, a warning, if you don't attend an interest group meeting for several months and haven't sent in an apology, you may be removed from the group mailing list.

Which reminds me, if you change your contact details, please can you let Gordon, our membership secretary know, so he can keep his records up to date!

Finally, the committee have talked about running an event in January, but after the success of this year's January buffet, have decided to rest on their laurels for a year. We are not planning on either a January meal or buffet for 2027 - unless someone wants to offer to organise one.

Speaker Review – Judith Proctor

Entertaining Scunthorpe u3a for the June 2026 monthly meeting was Mark Jessop with a talk on “Weather Folklore”. Mark travelled from Hull and has worked as an Assistant Scientific Officer for the Meteorological Office and also lectures to RAF pilots in training. He also served in the RAF at various stations including RAF Leeming and RAF Church Fenton.

He told the audience that he did a lot of observing the sky. A useful tool in forecasting is the weather book in which anything out of the ordinary or facts about the station are recorded. Mark told us about Admiral Robert Fitzroy who commanded HMS Beagle through Cape Horn and introduced the Beaufort Scale (Windscale), the Fitzroy Barometer and a storm warning method which was in use until 1970. Fitzroy became the first Head of the Meteorology Office in 1854 and he made the first forecasts and set the rules for forecasting. Politically, Fitzroy was the Governor of New Zealand.

Forecasting had to be written in the way people could understand, and many people relied on forecasting hence the invention of various sayings to forecast weather. A very familiar one being “Red sky at night shepherds delight red sky in the morning shepherds take warning”. “Mare’s tails and mackerel scales make tall ships take in their sails” is observed before a storm moves in. “Clear Moon, frost soon” is short term forecasting. When there is a halo around the sun or moon it means there will be rain or snow soon. Mark told us that a rainbow can be predicted when the sun is behind and rain in front. There are many sayings attributed to the Victorian age and to nature-based occurrences.

Mark informed us that most of our weather comes from the west over the seas. A rain belt is generally 100 miles wide and travels at 25 miles per hour which proves the saying “Rain before seven, fine by eleven,” which Mark uses all the time. Weather forecasting is based on maths and meteorology with electronic input, sometimes lacking a connection with the world around us. Looking at the sky is important in forecasting. A blurry sun called a “wet sun” is a sign of rain.

Mark gave us some ideas of tools used for long range forecasting. On Groundhog Day (2nd February) if you see a shadow winter weather will return if no shadow then it will be spring weather. St Swithin’s Day (15th July) if there is rain or sun then the weather will be the same for 40 days, not entirely proven. Tools for short range forecasting include pinecones – moisture closes the cone to protect the seeds, seaweed, weather stick (dry willow), weather rock and the best hygrometer is human hair. He also forecasts using nature.

Mark finished by quoting Admiral Fitzroy “The problem with the weather is that the only certain thing about it is its unpredictability” (1860). Interestingly Mark illustrated the fact that so called “old wives’ tales” certainly has a place in predicting and forecasting the weather.

Speaker Secretary – Pat Ackland

For our 24th July meeting, another new speaker. Joy Wood's talk "From Bedpan to Pen" takes us on a journey through her transition from nurse to writer. Joy is coming from Cleethorpes. I hope you enjoy.

Future Speakers

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'.

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 chair@scunthorpeu3a.org

U3A Trip to Buxton 4th July 2026

Forty-three attended the trip to Buxton. Unfortunately, our coach driver Neal had to make a detour due to road works near Chatsworth, luckily this did not put any extra time on our ETA.

The coach park was near to the Town Centre so it was easily reached. I personally visited the unique Buxton Crescent Experience, it is set across nine intimate rooms inside the iconic Buxton Crescent Hotel, which tells the stories of Buxton, famous for its water and the many people who came to seek its cure. I was surprised to learn that Ann Lister and Mary Queen of Scots attended numerous times to take the waters.

The highlight of the tour was the VR (visual reality) balloon ride as you're taken on a journey back in time to Buxton in 1792 in a hot air balloon, arriving at the Crescent in a horse drawn carriage and visiting the Ballroom where people were dancing in beautiful ball gowns. It was the first time I have experienced visual reality it was such fun I hope I will have the opportunity to try it again. The majority of us saw the well dressings, these were made up of flower petals which must have taken hours to make.



Some of the coach tour visited the Pavilion Gardens set in 23 acres. The Buxton Visitor Centre had plenty of information on Buxton as well as unusual gifts. By the amounts of bags that returned onto the coach plenty of shopping took place. I hope everyone enjoyed their trip as the town offered a variety of things to see and do. The weather was good to us although there was a light shower just before we returned to the coach. Hope to see some of you on the next trip, everyone is welcome. Trip organiser Pam Murphy. NB a black umbrella was left on the coach it will be at the next u3a meeting for collection.

***** U3A TRIP TO *****

PIECE HALL HALIFAX

CHRISTMAS MARKET

Date Sunday 29th November

Cost £10

Pick up - Morrisons 09.00 hrs.

DFS Brigg 09.15 hrs.

Coach Home 16.30hrs.

Visit Piece Hall Christmas Market, over fifty stalls showcasing some of the region's favourite independent producers and artisan makers. They will feature a wide range of unique stalls with everything from homeware to jewellery, gifts and delicious food to eat now or take home. Entertainment including a vintage carousel and a gigantic Christmas tree.

We will commence collecting names and money at the August meeting.

Registered charity number 1191994



Lincolnshire
Wildlife Trust



Luke Massey/20 20/20VISION

Save Hawthorpe

Please help save one of the largest areas of grassland left in Lincolnshire before it is ploughed and lost forever

Just a short note to thank you for your recent donation of £111.72 from Scunthorpe and District u3a. We are pleased that you enjoyed the talk about seals delivered by Ruth.

As Lincolnshire's foremost nature conservation charity, we could not do what we do without support. We now manage nearly 100 nature reserves across Greater Lincolnshire, protecting important species, habitats and landscapes. At the same time, we continue to educate and inspire people about the wonders of wildlife and connect people with nature. Your kind donation will therefore allow us to continue this vital work, especially as the need to save wildlife has never been greater.

Once again, thank you.

Paul Learoyd
Chief Executive
Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust

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

We are sad to inform members that Trackside Guns and Archery Ltd are selling their premises and there may be no further archery classes after August. The sale of the premises is going through but added complications mean the timescale is now fluid.

We have had some enjoyable archery sessions and wish Jed and Isabel a happy retirement.

Up-to-date information can be obtained from Chris at 07974 945206.

Art Appreciation – Maureen Ellis

The Art Appreciation group continues to meet monthly at the Bowls Club. This year we have looked at and discussed Artworks on a variety of topics such as Weather, Celebration, Sport, Games and Dance.

For the July meeting we had a guest speaker, Lynda Houghton, who gave a fascinating talk on the Harlequin in Art.

Sadly, the group is currently full and there is a waiting list of ten names.

Beginners' Family History – Kath Allen

The group continues to meet at the Bowls 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 at keallen@gmx.co.uk if you would like to join us.

Book Group – Sonia Czabaniuk

How do you keep cool in the Summer? Close the curtains and settle in with a good book. Then, when the mood takes you, come along to a meeting of like-minded people to share your thoughts and feelings about what you have read, or are reading. So, this is what we do every month.

A smaller group than usual in June, for a variety of reasons, but still plenty to discuss. We started with the book choice for last month - The Stone Chamber by Kate Ellis. A mixture of archaeology and crime. The book is the 25th outing for the main character, DI Wesley Peterson, and opens with a double murder and the discovery of old bones. Kate Ellis manages to weave both strands in such a way that it appears seamless. The group comments ranged from 'it was OK', 'a bit formulaic' to 'an easy read' and 'likeable characters. It can be read as a stand-alone book, so new readers should not feel that they need to read the other twenty-four to understand the nuances of the plot.

A change of pace for our next read. We all felt we needed a rest from murder and mayhem, so the choice is 'The Gran Tour' by Ben Aitken. The experiences of a 30-something man accompanying his grandmother on a number of coach tours across the UK and Europe. A real Summer read!

The next meeting is Thursday, 23rd July 2026, 10.30 at The Arc. (Full group)

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 20th July 10am at Scawby Village Hall.

If you are interested, please contact Pat Ackland at 01652 659839 or theacklands16350@btinternet.com

Card & Board Games Group – Rosemary Barratt

The group are now settled in the new venue of the Bowls Club, off Lloyds Avenue. We still meet every Thursday from 1pm to 3pm. A small, friendly group who currently enjoy playing Chinese Rummy, Canasta, Rummikub and Crown 5.

Now that we are settled, we have space for one or two new members. So, if you like playing cards or have a board game you would like to introduce us to, please get in touch through the u3a website.

Coffee and Chat – Margaret Lambert

Unluckily for some, but not for our July coffee morning, 13 attended on a very hot Friday morning at Kirton Garden Centre, summer dresses for the ladies and shorts for the men were out in force and a good old natter was had by all. Our next meeting will be at Lindsey Lodge Hospice on Friday 14th August 10-30am. If you are feeling lonely come along, you will be made very welcome and you will meet someone to talk too, we shall then meet again on the -

11th Sept. Angel Hotel, Brigg

9th Oct. Wetherspoons, Blue Bell, Scunthorpe

13th Nov. Wetherspoons, White Horse, Brigg

11th Dec 20/21 Visual Arts Centre, Scunthorpe

Contact is Margaret Lambert - marg.lambert@outlook.com or 01724 862627

Craft Group – Sandra Kirkby

The next Craft Group meeting will be on Wednesday 12th August at the Bowls Club off Lloyds Avenue from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Members bring whatever craft activities they are currently working on.

New members will be made very welcome.

Sandra Kirkby 07749 879 090 sandrakfirth@hotmail.com

Gardening Group – Jenny Winterburn

On June 23 we went to the Gatherer Florist in Bolham near Retford. The day was extremely hot, most of us had squash rather than a hot drink. The owners let us sit in their beautiful kitchen to cool off.

The garden was divided into two "rooms". One was their personal garden which had an extensive number of pots. When asked how long it took to water them, she said "Three and a half hours every day " Wow. The second "room" was a huge field full of cutting flowers where anyone can pick themselves a bouquet (£15) or a bucket of flowers (£45). An exhausting day, but worth it.

This month we are travelling to Bolham again. This time to Bolham Manor. Just hope it's not as hot.

Contact Jenny through the website.

History Group - Pat Ackland

We have finished Charles II - an interesting person with so many different facets to his personality. He was a charismatic character using charm to get his own way as well as being politically astute and ruthless. Relationships with Parliament were not good, although he was wise enough to avoid the mistakes of his father. Although appearing to support the Protestant cause, he was not averse to making secret deals with Roman Catholic France when it suited him... He converted to Catholicism on his death bed.

His court was legendary for its decadence and extravagance and he had many mistresses with 14 officially acknowledged illegitimate children. To his credit he steadfastly refused to divorce his Catholic wife despite the lack of heirs. We did wonder how much this had anything to do with the massive dowry she brought?

On the positive side, arts and sciences flourished during his reign with people like Sir Christopher Wren, Isaac Newton, Robert Boyle and many others. He was responsible for founding the Royal Society of London, the Royal Observatory at Greenwich and the Royal Chelsea Hospital.

The Habeas Corpus Act, a cornerstone of modern democracy, was also passed during his reign.

He is also credited with establishing the modern Royal Navy, turning it into a professional fighting force by completely reorganising its administration, pay and promotion, battle tactics and supply of ships. This also helped in the expansion of English territories especially in North America.

We had a long discussion about his legacy and rating as a king, ending up as a 6.

Next is James II and we have covered his early life and exile in France. He was also appointed Governor of the Royal African Company by his brother Charles II and one of the largest share-holders. The company held the monopoly on all English trade along the West African coast, initially in gold but later expanding into ivory and enslaved people. The company was responsible for shipping more enslaved Africans to the Americas during the Atlantic slave trade than any other company. Between 1672 and 1688 about 100,000 slaves were taken to the Americas by the company, amassing large sums of money for James II.

More to follow next month...

Local History - Eleanor Wasley

The June visit was a guided walk around Crowle, with Angus Townley, ending at St Oswald's Church for tea and biscuits. The weather forecast had been for rain but improved during the morning and we enjoyed sunshine and bright blue skies. Crowle does very much seem to be the forgotten part of the Isle of Axholme and all most people see of it is the rare times they drive through the town.



Exploring on foot made us realise just how important Crowle had been, first as a market centre and later as an industrial centre with flax and hemp industries, manufacture of agricultural machinery and brick making.

Angus had many pictures showing us what it had been like in the past and told plenty of stories about the history

of Crowle and the buildings we saw. As well as all the pubs, it had a temperance hall - now long gone.

We finished the walk at St Oswald's Church to admire the Crowle Stone at the back of the nave. This is thought to have been part of an Anglo-Saxon Cross shaft. This dates from the C10th and has a Runic inscription on the base.



It survived as it was reused as a lintel in the Norman Church, which protected its carvings. It is regarded as one of the most significant historical relics in the Isle of Axholme. It is not to be confused by the remains of the medieval market cross in the graveyard!

All in all, another good trip!

iPad and Tablet group – David Holmes

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 11th August 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 iPad, 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 by contacting my mobile 07892 864575 or Email dgsherlock50@gmail.com

David Holmes, Group Leader.

Lunch Group – Ann Owen

SCUNTHORPE u3a BLUE LUNCHEON GROUP

There will be no meeting of
the Blue Lunch Group
in August.

Murder Mystery Group – Wendy England

June's murder mystery was a bit different. Entitled Murder at the castle, it was set in 1386 with a cast including a sorceress, a fairy, a good wizard, a wicked warlock, a knight of the realm, the court jester and an Egyptian Barber (don't ask) - oh and not forgetting a deadly serpent and a DRAGON! There were accusations of witchcraft, sorcery and black magic, along with tangled love affairs and a missing spell book...

We did have to rather suspend belief at times, especially when the castle clock was able to tell the time to the exact minute and the sheriff investigating the case had access to finger print data...

It's all good fun. There is no meeting in July, so our next meeting will be in August for more mayhem and murder. New members are very welcome to come along and join in the fun.

Science and Technology Group – Alan Keen

The June meeting was an experiment. Following a request to find out more about changes in farming, Alan had prepared an info graph of ideas for us to follow up.

Everyone came back having chosen a topic. Although no one had chosen the same topic, they all linked up.

Carrock began with the targeting of fertilisers and particularly the use of hyper spectral imaging in the use of phosphates. In a previous session he had already highlighted the importance of phosphate to life. He began with the phosphate cycle and how this natural cycle is disrupted by modern agriculture resulting in the need to replace naturally occurring phosphates. The problem is if too much are applied, they end up in the water systems leading to eutrophication and the rapid growth of algae.

He explained how hyper spectral imaging can be used to survey large areas identifying areas of deficiency so allowing precise use of fertilisers.

This linked in seamlessly to Gordon's topic on the development of fertilisers from their organic beginnings (remember guano?) to the industrial production of PKN fertilisers.

He then went on to discuss pesticides and the significance of Rachel Carson's 'Silent Spring' published in 1962 which highlighted among other things the dangers of the widespread use of DDT. (Many of our parents had a DDT spray in the shed which was used against every known pest in the garden...)

Over the years DDT has been replaced by a number of other pesticides, including pyrethroids, carbamates and organophosphates which have all come with their own problems resulting in them also being banned. (Glyphosate is an example that all gardeners will be aware of.)

This led us to different forms of 'biological control' including the use of microbial pesticides and pheromones. We've all heard about GM crops, but Alan K explained how precision breeding is used to make precise, targeted changes to an organism's DNA, speeding up the agricultural breeding process by achieving beneficial, natural traits without inserting foreign DNA from unrelated species.

Alan K continued by talking about the problems caused by large and heavy machinery on soil compaction and the problems that causes. Tractor wheels on heavy machinery help reduce soil compaction but do a lot of damage to tarmac when driven on the highway.

There is now a move to swarm robots, where fleets of lightweight machines are able to 'communicate' and collaborate to perform different tasks, including planting and seeding, crop monitoring, weeding and pest management and harvesting. They are cheaper, cause less damage to the soil and also allow very precise targeting.

Paul had chosen a very different topic - how the changes in farming have led to a loss in diversity, particularly with the loss of hedgerows. He had a red list of bird species showing how their populations have dropped over the last 50 years. Starlings and greenfinches were once common sights in parks and gardens but are now rarely seen as their population is down by 60-65%. We have lost 82% of corn buntings and 97% of tree sparrows. Much of this is down to lack of seed left in fields after harvesting and the planting of winter wheat.

Paul has a particular interest in Dormice and efforts being made to reintroduce them. A lot of the success comes down to successful management of hedgerows. Cutting different sides on a three-year cycle is much better for wildlife than an annual flailing. Not only does this destroy wildlife habitats, it also prevents flower and berry production and weakens hedge structures leading to gaps.

Although the traditional method of layering hedges was time consuming, it maintained wildlife and food supplies as well as providing an effective stock proof barrier. (Carrock mentioned they also formed a very effective barrier against small boys too...)

Alan G finished with a reminder of what life on the farm was like 70 years ago with the edges of fields been cut by hand using scythes before the tractors arrived to cut the rest of the field. Do you remember stooks of corn drying in the fields and haystacks? Alan had old photographs of these as well as old threshing machines and horses...

We all thoroughly enjoyed the session - not only did it bring back memories of what we have lost, it also highlighted that not all modern farming is bad!

Qi Gong – Mel Ogden

The Qi Gong group will be starting again in September.

If you are interested in starting in this group (or indeed, restarting) could you please email me at melogden0@gmail.com

Quiz Group – Andrew Bullen

The next quiz group meeting is on Thursday 6th August.

Scrabble Group – Wendy England

The next Scrabble Group meeting will be **Wednesday 5th August** at the **Malt Shovel** pub in Ashby. 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**.

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.

Wendy England – 01724 862490 or mrswendland@btinternet.com

Singing for fun – Mary Magee

Singing for fun is having July and August off as lots of us are on holiday.

The group is doing really well and we have lots of fun.

We will start up again on 8th of September.

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 at: dgsherlock50@gmail.com 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.

Woodland Wanderers – Robin Poole



The July wander took place on a beautiful afternoon at the “Far Ings National Nature Reserve” near Barton-upon-Humber. Although many of the plants were past their best we were treated to interesting wildlife with a couple of Egrets and Cormorants and a variety of Butterflies and Large Dragonflies.

There will be no wander in August so we will meet again in September.