

SCUNTHORPE AND DISTRICT U3A NEWSLETTER

<https://scunthorpe.u3asite.uk>

The cut-off date for contributions to the October newsletter is **Wednesday 18th November**.

Contributions as always to:
newseditor@scunthorpeu3a.org

Chair's Comments – Eleanor Wasley

The Third Age Trust recently carried out a survey canvassing information about involvement and satisfaction with the u3a. Over 10,000 members responded and the very positive headline results are shown below...

Headline findings

95%

say u3a has improved their life in some way

90%

say u3a gives them opportunities to keep learning and stay curious

79%

say u3a has expanded their social connections

77%

say their sense of wellbeing has improved since joining

66%

say u3a has helped them stay mentally and physically active

45%

say being part of u3a has reduced feelings of loneliness or isolation

Nearly all the responses said that being a member of the u3a had increased friendship circles and confidence. Meetings and interest groups not only stimulated the brain but gave members a sense of purpose and improved wellbeing. Interest groups give the chance to try something new or revive a long-neglected interest. It's much more fun as a group too!

The social aspects of the u3a are very important and I was surprised that the figure for reducing feelings of loneliness or isolation wasn't higher. When people retire from work, they can feel they have lost part of their identity. The loss of a spouse or partner can also be devastating and the u3a can not only give a structure and purpose to life again, but also increase friendship circles and social contacts.

Looking around at monthly meetings and also at interest groups, I get a very positive vibe. As with everything in life, the more you put in, the more you get out. Members all enjoy the monthly meeting and nearly all the responses said that being a member of the u3a had increased friendship circles and confidence. Meetings and interest groups not only stimulated the brain but gave members a sense of purpose and improved feedback on speakers is always positive. Unfortunately, I was away for last month's meeting and gather I missed a really good talk. If you know of good speakers, do let Pat our speaker secretary know as she is always looking out for new ideas.

Jean Parrott

We are saddened to announce the sudden death of longstanding member Jean Parrott earlier this month.

Our condolences go to her family.

New Member and getting involved workshop

Monday 25th January 2027

Scunthorpe Rugby Club, Heslam Park from 10-12

Over the last two years a lot of new members have joined Scunthorpe u3a. This is an opportunity for us to meet you and find out what you want and would like from us. It also gives us chance to share all the different ways you can become more involved with our u3a. The more you contribute, the more you gain from being a member. There are lots of different ways you can be involved from putting out chairs before a monthly meeting to help run an interest group. The workshop is also designed for any existing member who has thought about helping but not yet taken the plunge!

All are welcome and many hands really do make light work. If you are interested in attending, please can you let Pat know by **October 31st**. (Yes, this is really early but we need an idea of approximate numbers so we can book the right size room at the Rugby Club).

Contact Pat via the website.



Speaker Review – Judith Proctor

25th September 2026.

“Headscarf Heroes” was the subject of this month’s meeting; a talk given by Malcolm Johnson. A talk full of details and some songs around the fishing community of Hull. He spoke about the winter of woe in 1968, tragedy and eventual triumph following backlash, betrayal and leading to belated recognition for the wives of fishermen. The fishing community in Hull was based around Hessle Road where young boys often went to be Deckie Learners on the trawlers. The fishermen were locally known as 3-day millionaires being in dock for 3 days with plenty of cash to spend, all fashionably dressed in “Ruckerback” suits, about whom songs were written (Mike Waterson “3-day Millionaire.”)

The trawler owners were powerful people even over the unions. Conditions at sea were bad, fishing in all weathers in icy conditions. Only cursory checks were made on the trawlers before sailing and there were many dangers with masts icing up and the crew having to de-ice this by hand. Often the skipper would act as the ship’s Doctor. Men often recruited by agents known as ship’s runners and owners had the monopoly on selling bad weather gear to fishermen. There was often no skilled radio operator on board and no mother ship backing up the trawlers.

The fishing industry was very suspicious and wary of bad omens such as no coins to be taken aboard as the sea gods would think the crew were wealthy and the catch would be bad. If there was a disaster at sea the Seaman’s Mission would inform families of any fatalities. No women were allowed on the dockside.

The fishing grounds were around Iceland and off the Norwegian Coast. 1968 saw several tragedies at sea such as in January the St Romanus set sail for Norway and was lost with 20 crew members including the skipper, Jim Wheeldon. A may day signal was sent on 11th January and picked up by an Icelandic ship but 2 days later a life raft was washed up on the shore. It was Hull Daily Mail that pushed for a search which was carried out on 26th January and by 30th January relatives were informed that the ship and the crew had been lost. Other losses followed such as the Kingston Peridot lost off the coast of Iceland in rough seas. A heavy oil slick and a life raft were sighted, and the ship was presumed lost with all crew. The Ross Cleveland suffered the same fate in gale force 11 hurricane winds, 19 out of 20 crew members lost, the survival of one was felt to be a miracle. Henry Eddon was “the man the sea gave back”. He was cleaning the radar mast when the ship went down and fell overboard and was hauled into a life raft. The life raft washed up in Iceland with

just Henry Eddon alive and he took shelter in a sheep pen. He was found by a 14-year-old boy tending the sheep. The Daily Mail paid for his family to fly out to Iceland in return for an exclusive. Thus began a fight to get improved safety conditions for fishermen by the wives and friends and newspapers. Also involved was John Prescott an ex-merchant seaman and subsequently a Labour MP. The women achieved this in 2 weeks making it the most successful civil action of the 20th Century. They were named the headscarf heroes as they worked in the fishing industry and always wore headscarves to walk to work.

The most prominent of the women was Lillian Bilocca ("Big Lil") and Chrissie Smallbone who started a petition on January 30th for better safety and to get a skilled radio operator aboard every trawler. She wrote to the Daily Mail and canvassed in pubs and on the streets gathering momentum and supporters on the way. They met with 600 women in Victoria Hall on 2nd February 1968, Big Lil being centre stage and not needing a microphone. They prepared to picket Harold Wilson at 10 Downing Street, marched to the docks to confront the trawler owners. Harold Wilson sent a telegram offering to meet a 4 women delegation at Westminster and Yvonne Blenkinsop, Chrissie, Mary Dennes (skippers' wife and very eloquent) and Big Lil took with them a list of things to improve. They won, a safety inspection before sailing was introduced and trained radio operators on each trawler. A Fisherman's Charter was drawn up with 8 points. The delegation was met at Kings Cross by Jack Jones of the TGW Union John Prescott and 2 ministers who said, "you've got it ladies; you have got it all". After this Big Lil suffered some backlash from some men who thought she should not interfere in men's business and that she had presented a bad image of Hull. Big Lil received hate mail and death threats, she was betrayed by Mary Dennes and Chrissie Smallbone shunned her. She was blacklisted by owners and unfortunately died from cancer at the age of 59.

There are plaques dedicated to all the women in the Hull Fishing Museum. Yvonne Blenkinsop was given the freedom of the City in 2018, Chrissie Smallbone received an MBE and died in 2001 aged 62. Mary Dennes, a single mother with 3 children trained as a school nurse and went on to be matron at Eton College, dying in 2017 aged 80. In 1990 a posthumous plaque was placed in Victoria Hall for Lillian Bilocca.

Malcolm mentioned a book The Headscarf Revolutionaries "and there was also a play written for the city of culture about Big Lil. "12 Silk Headscarves" staged at Hull Minster in 2018. Big Lil gave a silk headscarf to everyone who had cared for her. A mural has been painted in Hull and there is funding for a statue.

A thoroughly interesting talk with lots of facts and of great interest to those who have been interested or have links to the fishing industry of Hull.

Speaker Secretary – Pat Ackland

I thought members might like to see what our last speaker, Malcolm Johnson, emailed to me after his talk.

“It's always good to hear that a talk has gone well! I thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon - everyone was so welcoming and helpful in the setting up. Then it was an excellent audience. I'll happily return with something different in 2028 - as long as I've remained fit in body and mind!”

Malcolm promised to send a list of reading resources about the 1968 disaster- here it is-

HULL 1968: A WINTER OF WOE

Recommended further reading, watching listening and visiting:

Brian Lavery, *The Headscarf Revolutionaries*, Barbican Press, 2015

Many interesting photographs and newspaper reports can be found in the Hull Daily Mail archive, www.hulldailymail.co.uk

Hull's Headscarf Heroes is an excellent 1-hour BBC4 documentary, available on YouTube

Music featured in the presentation, usually available on YouTube and/or Spotify:

3 Day Millionaire, Martin Simpson on CD Home Recordings (2020)

The Luckiest Sailor, Hissyfit, Wash Her Man Away, The Man the Sea Gave Back, I Am a Fish House Woman, Reg Meuross, all on CD 12 Silk

Handkerchiefs (2018). You will also find extracts from the Hull Minster live performance on YouTube.

Other modern folk songs about the trawler disasters, such as Lament for The Hull Trawlers, Frankie Armstrong, will be found on YouTube.

N.B. Well worth a visit if you're in Hull is:

Hull Fishing Heritage Centre, 255 Hessle Road, Hull HU3 4B (staffed by volunteers, so see website for current opening times) also the site of the Headscarf Heroes commemorative benches.

If you come across any other relevant written / audio / visual material, do please let me know

Happy trawling through these sources!

Malcolm Johnson

Our speaker for our next meeting on **23rd October** will be Horace Liberty - a welcome return visitor. Horace's talk on London Statues promises to be both informative and entertaining and he will tell us about the sometimes funny stories about well-known public sculptures in London.

Our meeting in November is on 27th November. Something different! I have invited 2 members of the Sealed Knot society to come and talk to us about the British Civil War. They usually come in costume and bring along all sorts of accessories. I hope you enjoy it.

Registered charity number 1191994

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'.

U3A TRIP TO PIECE HALL HALIFAX CHRISTMAS MARKET

DATE Sunday 29th November

COST U3A TRIP TO

Pick up

Morrisons 09.00hrs

DFS Brigg 09.15

Coach Home 16.30hrs

We will be collecting money for this trip at the next u3a meeting, anyone who hasn't yet paid could you please do so at this meeting.

If you would like to go on this trip there may be some seats available due to cancellations so, please contact,

Pam Murphy trip Organiser.

David Holmes Treasurer.

Can you help?

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.

Recycle

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

OUR WEBSITE

This can be seen at:

<https://scunthorpe.u3asite.uk>

To find out everything you need to know about our Interest Groups please click on the Groups button at the top of the website screen. All groups will then appear. By clicking on one of the blue buttons, the system will sort the groups into meeting days, venues or just alphabetically.

As these details should always be kept up to date, this is, by far, the best way to find out what's happening and when.

Contact any Group Leader by clicking on their name.

Don't forget that if you come to our monthly meetings, we will provide details of all groups and you can sign up to join that way.

Around the Groups

Archery / Air Rifle Shooting – Chris Farrow

We are still not sure when Trackside Archery will be closing down. However, archery sessions will continue for the foreseeable future. I am currently investigating other archery clubs and will keep you informed via this newsletter.

Next session will be Thursday 12th November 11am until 1pm subject to confirmation.

Chris Farrow

Beginners' Family History – Kath Allen

The group continues to meet at the Bowls Club on the first Tuesday of each month. 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.

Book Group – Sonia Czabaniuk

As there was no meeting in September there is nothing to report from the book group, other than our next meeting is Thurs, 29th October, 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 19th October 10am at Scawby Village Hall.

If you are interested, please contact Pat Ackland.

Card & Board Games Group – Rosemary Barratt

The group are getting back to full strength following summer holidays. We continue to play Canasta and Chinese Rummy but, for a complete change, recently we played Uno. There was a lot of tactics and some laughter involved.

Interested in joining us? Please contact me through the u3a website.
Rosemary Barratt, Convenor

Craft Group – Sandra Kirkby

The next Craft Group meeting will be on Wednesday 11th November 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.

Coffee and Chat – Margaret Lambert

A small gathering of our regulars met at the Blue Bell -Wetherspoons- this morning, a wet cold morning which I don't like after all the lovely hot weather we've had. It was the usual chit chat. We commented on how busy it was with lots of people having breakfast, but none of us was weak and we had a breakfast too.

I wondered if anyone had any ideas of new places to go for coffee, we have to think of distance, time of opening, coping with approx 15 people and car parking.

The next two meetings:-

13th NOVEMBER -WETHERSPOONS-BRIGG

11TH DECEMBER-20\21 VISUAL ARTS CENTRE-SCUNTHORPE

Contact is Margaret Lambert.

Blue Lunch Group – Ann Owen

SCUNTHORPE u3a BLUE LUNCHEON GROUP

Our next venue will be at

BITE TO EAT

Butterwick Rd, Messingham. DN17 3PN

Wednesday 25th November 2026

Christmas Dinner Eating at MIDDAY

Red lunch group - Cheryl Hassall

Our November lunch will be on Wednesday 18th, 12.30 for 1.00 at "A Bite to Eat", Butterwick Road, DN17 3PN.

They do not need a preorder, but please let me know by Wednesday 11th November if you would like to attend.

Murder Mystery - Wendy England

Ten of us, including two new members, met to unravel the latest murder mystery, presented by John and Chris.

Entitled Champagne Murder, it was a step back to the swinging sixties when Lord Michael Jagged had been found dead in his bedroom after drinking champagne. Death had been caused by a poisonous gas introduced into the bottle using a devious widget.

There was the usual cast of dubious characters with names carefully chosen as a reminder of famous characters of the time (remember Mary Jane Faithless, and Wiggy?) All had plenty of motives, and were aided and abetted by the sinister presence of Dr Doctor as well as helpful input from Scotland Yard detective, Austin McClue.

Clues were carefully hidden in the dialogue and no stone was left unturned to solve the mystery, despite many red herrings along the way to muddy the water...

Qi Gong – Mel Ogden

Sessions are run on the first and third Friday of each month at St Paul's Hall. It was agreed by the group that, in future, sessions would start at 1.45.

If you are interested in coming along, please contact the group leader Mel Ogden to register your interest.

Quiz Group – Andrew Bullen

At our September meeting nineteen quizzers put their thinking caps on and a great time was had by all. Cakes, bacon butties, tea, coffee.... Oh! Yes, there were plenty of questions and, thankfully, the answers were given in the correct order! Questions included railway stations with a platform zero, general trivia and a what came first round.

A number of members from the group took part in a quiz at Connect Church on Ashby Road on Saturday 10th October. Their quiz was to raise funds for their link in Nepal. A good time was had and our members mingled with other quizzers and joined a number of teams.

Our next meeting is on Thursday 5th November in St. Paul's small hall. We start at 10 but use the cafe there from about 9.45.

Singing for fun – Mary Magee

The singing for fun group is doing really well and we have lots of fun. The next meeting is on the 10th November at the Scunthorpe Bowls Club.

Rummicub – David Holmes

Our next 2 meetings are on the following, Tuesday 3rd and 17th November 2026, time 10am to 12pm at Oasis community Space Cafe, Avenue Vivian, off Ferry Road, Scunthorpe DN15 8LG.

This Group is open to both North Lindsey and Scunthorpe u3a members.

If you have got a Rummikub set please bring it along with you if you are coming to these meetings.

New members are welcome to join our group to have fun and if you have not played it before we can teach you.

If you cannot make it to these meetings, please let me know by contacting David Holmes, Group Leader.

Scrabble Group – Wendy England

The next scrabble group meeting will be at the “Malt Shovel” in Ashby on Wednesday 4th November.

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.