
North Walsham u3a Newsletter September 2026



I have spent quite a lot of time this month compiling the programme card for next year. This would not have been possible without Brenda, who has worked hard booking the varied and interesting speakers.

The programme cards are free and will be available at the monthly meetings, starting on September 4th.

Photo: Coin Detail by Paul Heinrich

Thanks to all of you who have contributed to this month's issue. It is nice to receive everybody's contributions, particularly from those who have not previously sent articles. I am particularly pleased that so many are sending photos.

The copy deadline for next month is **Thursday September 24th**. Please send any comments or articles to me at ralph4ed@hotmail.com

In this month's issue

General Information	Page	Group Reports	Page
Thoughts from the Chair	2	Book Groups	5
Announcements	3	Coffee Mornings	5
Groups & Days	4	Cryptic Crosswords	5
September Walks	11	Current Affairs	6
		Drama Group	7
		Gardening	7
		Jazz Appreciation	8
		Paddle Group	9
		Quiz Group	10
		10 Pin Bowling	10
		u3sings	10
		Wildlife & Woodland Walks	11

Thoughts From the Chair

What a Celebration – and What Next?



What a wonderful afternoon we had for our 20th Anniversary Event in August, with 67 members attending, including many who have only recently joined us. There was plenty of laughter and conversation, memories being shared, outside activities, music, a splendid raffle, a lovely buffet and, of course, Rosemary's magnificent anniversary cake.

What really made the afternoon work was the team behind it. We had five committee members and eight volunteers helping with everything from sandwiches and setting up the hall to flowers, displays, refreshments and outdoor fun and games.

One of the loveliest comments I received afterwards was simply, "What a great team!" – and I absolutely endorse this. Members described the afternoon as "a truly lovely party", "such a friendly, happy event" and "an outstanding success". Thank you to everyone who helped, everyone who came along and those who took photographs. I'll share more of these, although some are already on Facebook.

As we begin our new membership year, that spirit of teamwork seems a particularly good place to start thinking about our future.

Our AGM is approaching and, as always, we will be looking for new members to join the Committee. But we also want to think more widely about how we can strengthen North Walsham u3a and make it easier for more members to contribute.

Not everyone wants to be on a committee, but many people are happy to help with a particular task, activity or event. The Committee has therefore been discussing whether we could separate more clearly the governance responsibilities of the Committee from some of the day-to-day tasks involved in running our u3a.

Most importantly, we would like members to be part of the conversation. How can we organise ourselves so that volunteering is enjoyable, manageable and something more of us feel able to take part in?

I firmly believe that if we can get this right, it will ensure that North Walsham u3a remains strong and resilient for the future.

Warm regards

Maureen

Announcements

Our next Friday meeting is on the 4th of September 2026 at 2.15pm and the speaker Alan Gray from East Ruston of Old Vicarage Gardens is talking about the "Creation of the Garden"

The 1st of September is the start of new membership year, and we will be collecting membership fees for renewal at the Friday meeting from those that prefer this way of paying. It is going to be a busy meeting, so can you please come if possible, a bit earlier if you are going to make a payment.

We have our new programme leaflet of speakers from September 2026 to August 2027, and this will be available at the meeting. Group leaders if you could please collect some for members who may not be at the meeting please do. It would also be helpful if you or a group member could be around to meet new members.

A new group is being proposed by Debbie Walmsley called Social Connections – please see her proposal below.

If you are interested in joining the committee or becoming a volunteer, please contact Maureen on Cavanagh_m@yahoo.co.uk. I will also be sending out emails and further details after the monthly meeting.

U3A Social Connections Group

A new, informal group with no leader and no regular meetings — simply a WhatsApp space where members can find company for social outings. Whether you're single or your partner isn't interested in a particular activity, you can post any idea: garden centre trips, theatre or cinema visits, pub lunches, evening meals, days out, or weekends away.

If you'd prefer not to go alone, share your plan in the WhatsApp group and see who'd like to join you. Members then arrange details between themselves.

A relaxed, friendly way to enjoy activities together.

If you would like to be added to the WhatsApp Group contact Debbie Walmsley or Maureen Cavanagh.

Debbie Walmsley

NW u3a Groups and Days

Week	Day	Morning	Afternoon
1	Monday	Coffee Morning <i>Richard Nevill</i> 	Jazz Appreciation <i>Jim Costello</i>  Croquet <i>John Grier</i>
	Tuesday	Darts <i>Trevor Cheeseman</i> 	
	Wednesday		Mac Users <i>Richard Nevill</i> 
	Thursday		Digital Photography <i>Richard Nevill</i> Mind, Body, Spirit <i>Chrissie Kimber</i>
	Friday	Paddling Partners <i>John Harris-Hall</i>	Monthly meeting 
	Sunday	Sundy Lunch <i>Jazz Waspe</i>	
Week	Day	Morning	Afternoon
2	Monday	Coffee Morning <i>Richard Nevill</i> 	Classical Music <i>Jean Simpson</i>
	Tuesday		Quiz Group <i>Brenda Redding</i> 
	Wednesday		
	Thursday	Ten Pin Bowling <i>Diane Mulligan</i>	Book Group <i>Yvonne Dickinson</i>  U3Sings <i>Patsy Tomlinson</i>  Wine Appreciation <i>Roy Tuff</i>
	Friday	Paddling Partners <i>John Harris-Hall</i>	History <i>Brenda Tibbles</i> Life Story <i>Maureen Cavanagh</i> 
Week	Day	Morning	Afternoon
3	Monday	Coffee Morning <i>Richard Nevill</i> 	Committee Meeting
	Tuesday		Gardening <i>Steve Guratsky</i>
	Wednesday		Rock & Pop <i>Marilyn Nevill</i>
	Thursday	Current Affairs <i>Steve Guratsky</i>	Easy Bytes <i>Richard Nevill</i>  Healthy Living <i>Suzanne Lakin</i> Book Group 2 <i>Yvonne Dickinson</i> 
	Friday	The Big Question <i>Steve Guratsky</i> Walking <i>Chrissie Kimber (please check first)</i> Paddling Partners (<i>John Harris-Hall</i>)	Brain Games <i>Janet Head</i>  Scrabble <i>Jane Harris-Hall</i>  Mah Jong <i>Ralph Edwards</i> 
Week	Day	Morning	Afternoon
4	Monday	Coffee Morning <i>Richard Nevill</i> 	
	Tuesday		Gardening <i>Steve Guratsky</i> Meditation <i>Chrissie Kimber</i>
	Wednesday		Knit & Stitch* <i>Brenda Tibbles</i> Art <i>Stella Shanahan</i> Quiz Group <i>Brenda Redding</i> †
	Thursday	Cryptic Crosswords <i>John Harris-Hall</i> 	Tai Chi <i>Maureen Cavanagh</i> 
	Friday	Family History** <i>Marilyn Nevill</i> Paddling Partners (<i>John Harris-Hall</i>)	

*Last Wednesday of the month

**Last Friday of every other month starting September

† Last Wednesday 7.30 pm

News from the Groups

Book Groups



Book Group One

"The Beekeeper of Aleppo" by Christie Lefteri generated a lot of lively discussion. The book begins by following a family in Syria, their journey to England and then the waiting as they seek asylum. It was definitely a book loved by some and disliked by others. Some found the writing to be confusing, there was a character who turned out to not exist, and there was a lot of switching backwards and forwards in time. I, personally, found the beginning in particular quite harrowing and thought that the trouble with the book was not the writing but the subject matter. Someone else thought that the trouble with the book was "that someone had written it"! Read it and make up your own mind!! Surprisingly it averaged a 5 out of 10, higher than we thought it might.

Book Group Two

"Belgravia" by Julian Fellowes was very well received. It had intrigue, social class issues, loyalty, betrayal, goodies and baddies AND it had a happy ending. We felt the sense of history (it was set in the early 19th Century) was very good and added to the plot and thought that Julian Fellowes was to be trusted when it came to historical accuracy. It was a lovely book to start the group off with. We gave it a seven and a half out of ten."

So, two books which were received very differently. This is the joy of belonging to a book group, we get to explore others' opinions which open up new ways of thinking for us as individuals. Bring it on!

Yvonne Dickinson

Coffee Mornings

Richard Nevill is still holding coffee mornings on Zoom every Monday between 10 and 12. If you are interested in joining the fun, get in touch with Richard via the website.

Richard Nevill

Cryptic Crosswords



In August, the cryptic crossword group – fully manned – met on 27th August. We kicked off with the latest "El Sereno" crossword from *The Oldie* and took about 50 minutes to fully solve it. There was a frank discussion about some of the clues not being particularly well set (and no, that wasn't because we took a while to solve them!) One of the many joys in solving cryptic crosswords is appreciating a really well set clue once solved. The group does try to see exactly how any clue works even if it's a BIFD*. After using "El Sereno" crosswords for a few months, we have decided to revert to *The Guardian* "Quiptic" crossword in future.

All members of the group successfully solved clues and the different ways of arriving at the solutions are really useful learning tools. Our COD** for this crossword was:

"Men leading the trumpet section" (7)¹

As usual, there was much non-crossword discussion including a review of *The Odyssey* – not well received by that filmgoer.

The second puzzle was a (level 86) *Times* cryptic taking just 30 minutes to complete. A "scallion" being an old word for an onion was a very useful piece of knowledge on this occasion. One of our members was on sparking form and probably accounted for some of our record-breaking completion time. (I'm not going to name that person but two days ago I spent a couple of hours on Barton Broad with them on a very windy day and felt completely safe; their sailing skills match their crossword solving ability).

Our COD was:

"Nearly go out with bird, a young one from a poor area" (11)²

If you would like to join our group (we meet on the fourth Thursday in NW Library at 10am) you would be very welcome but we probably can only fit in one or possibly two more so be quick...

Contact me via the u3a website.

*"Bunged In From Definition"

**Clue Of the Day"

MAHOUTS¹

GUTTERSNIPE²

John Harris–Hall

Current Affairs

We were back at our usual venue this month, with a nearly full house.

Despite the fact that we were in the middle of what journalists called the silly season, there is still a lot of politics about. We talked about the following topics:-

The disparity between crime statistics and perception

ADHD/Autism diagnosis and educational differences generally

Jason Ardy's death

Ralph Edwards



Drama Group



A 2nd successful taster session for a new drama group was held on the 18th of August. This was again hosted by Tony and Carmel Brown who both help run 'North Walsham Drama' a local drama group.

The session started with a couple of fun 'warm ups' which included making up a storyline, with each person adding a sentence in turn. It was amazing the direction the story took us!

We then read scenes from a couple of original 'North Walsham Drama Group' Scripts. 'Saturday Night at the Oaks' and 'The Haunting of Manor Lodge'. with everyone really getting into the characters and stories..

We have lots of ideas for the future and would love to make 'drama' a regular u3a interest group. For this to happen, we need more people to come along. No 'acting' experience is necessary, just an interest in drama and a willingness to join in and have some fun. If you would like more details, please email Tony on antbrown9901@gmail.com . We plan to hold the next drama meeting before the end of September.

Tony & Carmel Brown

Gardening Group



It seemed fitting for us to pay a visit to Hazel (a group member) for our August monthly gathering especially as her garden housed the tallest of all the sunflowers that any of us had managed to grow in this year's 'tallest sunflower' competition. Hazel's tallest sunflower was well over 3 meters with new growth still evident. (See pic 1 – spot the flower towering above her conservatory). John Tuck had kindly given each of us two seeds in spring. My only surviving, vertically challenged, sunflower had reached 228cm, but when Hazel mentioned a German gardener (Hans-Peter Schiffer, of Karst, Germany) who had grown a 30-foot, 1-inch / 917cm sunflower, my own seemed incredibly dinky! An animated discussion followed about what method Hans-Peter must have used to keep such a monster upright. Did he use scaffolding? Did he grow it up against a structure such as a tall house (I mumbled something about a cathedral)? Hazel was unable to work out how you could possibly measure such a tall plant because it was difficult enough for her to stretch up high enough. (You can see how Hans-Peter managed it in pic 2). Of course, we all wanted to know Hazel's cultivation secret: it was good, old fashioned horse manure (placed at the bottom of the pot) and giving at least two waterings a day. The rest of Hazel's wonderfully secluded plot stocked all sorts of lush plants including a mystery plant (new to me) with large hairy leaves called Calycanthus (Carolina allspice) growing right next to her sunny boundary hedge, bearing unusual flowers (pic 3) and according to the RHS, is hardy down to -10C.

Hazel asked us to identify these flowers (pic 4) growing behind her greenhouse. We all drew a blank. They were Jerusalem artichokes! Who knew? Hazel has a new curved pergola arch and has planted a vigorous Montana Clematis on the righthand side to ensure that the roots remain cool and shady (pic 5). In addition, Hazel has a beautiful moon arch with two different types of

Jasmine climbing over it (top centre pic 6). It seems to me, that in only four years, Hazel has managed to create a plantswoman's

haven. Many of her plants (plus the cart in pic 7) came from Dover Farm Nursery in Briston. And just in case you're curious, Hazel's favourite spot in her garden is the summerhouse, looking out over the garden, complete with a cup of tea – which makes absolute sense to me.



Veronica Korczak

Jazz Appreciation

Last month, Roger treated us to a wonderful afternoon of "Giants of Jazz". His varied and entertaining selections were enjoyed by everyone, with plenty of Cool Jazz providing the perfect soundtrack to the baking weather.



Our next u3a Jazz Group meeting will be on Monday 7 September at St Nicholas Hall, starting at 2.00 pm. We'll be exploring the music and remarkable career of the great John Coltrane, who would have celebrated his 100th birthday in September.

If you'd like to come along, please let me know. You certainly don't need to be a jazz expert—just bring your curiosity and enjoy the music!

Jim Costello

jamescostello@yahoo.com

Paddle Group

In August, the Paddle Group had great paddles from Wroxham, Martham (twice) and Sutton Staithe. We did have some warmer weather than usual but we took precautions and were fine. There were lots of holiday craft on the water during the school holidays so we had to be extra vigilant. One, very long and wide, holiday boat was spotted with an obvious “Cap’n Dad” at the front, “galley slave mum” inside and a miserable looking lad at the stern: “is he not letting you drive?” we asked the lad...a lovely smile and loud “NO!!” made us all chuckle.



The group discussed the merits of avoiding blue-green algae and have decided we might attempt a launch from South Walsham as long as we don't fall in and remember to clean our kayaks thoroughly when we leave.

Following an article in the EDP, we have decided to add our kayaking mileage to the 500 mile target of YANA (a local charity offering psychological help and support to young people).

We are delighted to welcome Sue and Jane to our group.

The Paddle Group are always keen to welcome new paddlers. Please note that we do not provide equipment or formal coaching, but we're a friendly group and are always happy to help each other with loading and unloading kayaks when needed.

If you'd like to know more, please get in touch via the NW U3A website.



John Harris-Hall

Quiz Group



On Wednesday evening 9 of us went to the Black Swan pub for the quiz night.

This is an enjoyable evening of 7 rounds of various topics. Henry was excellent at the music round.

There was only 1 point difference from the final scores between the 2 teams. The scores don't really matter, as this is a fun and sociable evening.

The Wednesday evening quiz is always on the last Wednesday evening of the month at the Black Swan pub, starting at 7.30pm. There are 12 spaces (2 tables of 6)

To book a place please contact either Brenda Redding or Karen Fox

Bredding@tiscali.co.uk or

Dollydaydreams100@hotmail.com

Unfortunately, the Tuesday afternoon quiz has been discontinued by the Black Swan.

Brenda Redding & Karen Fox

Ten Pin Bowling



10th September 10.00am at "Strikers" is our next date for bowling, it will be good to see our fellow bowlers after the summer break.

If you wish to join us, all are welcome, the list will be on the raffle table at the monthly meeting, or you can email me at diane_mulligan@yahoo.co.uk

Diane Mulligan

U3Sings



We had a great August session of U3Sings. David led us through our warm up exercises and then we sang some old favourites including Rhythm of Life, Sloop John B and five verses of Jonah-Man-Jazz. We had lots of chats over tea and biscuits.

Our next session is on Thursday, 10th September at 1.45pm in The Sacred Heart Church Room. We are a friendly group who just sing for fun. Come and join us for a free taster session.

Patsy Tomlinson and Margaret Jeppesen

Wildlife and Woodland Wanderers

Our second wander took us to the wonderfully serene If Not Now When community woodland, tucked quietly on the edge of Suffield. It is one of those places that instantly slows the pace — the perfect escape from the mayhem of the summer holidays, and really, the perfect place to slip away to anytime you want to be surrounded by peace and nature.

The woodland was established in April 2002 in memory of local resident David Hood, who dreamed of creating a space for community connection and wildlife conservation during the final weeks of his life. The site includes a species-rich meadow and a beautifully managed garden area with fruit trees, a labyrinth, and other thoughtful features that make wandering there a gentle, reflective experience. I think everyone agreed it was a beautiful quiet haven that felt both personal and welcoming, a perfect way to start the week.



Debbie Walmsley

August Walks 2026

Walking Group Coordinator

Chrissie Kimber at rebnikc@btinternet.com

Tuesday September 8th start time 9:30 approx 5.5 miles

Walk leader Jeanne Heal

Ebridge Mill car park NR28 9QG

The walk includes a stop at the pop-up cafe approx. half way at Honing village hall Tea/Coffee and cake for £1. Cash only



Friday 25 September. Start time 10 a.m. – approximately 4.7 miles

Walk leader Joe Pitchford

Meet at The Cricketers (NR11 7AA) on Aldborough Green – there is plenty of parking around the Green and at the side of the Village Hall. The walk is along country paths and quiet lanes.

Option for lunch is The Artisan Bistro, Alby Crafts & Gardens, Alby, Norfolk NR11 7HW (01263 761652) www.artisanbistro.co.uk