
North Walsham u3a Newsletter March 2026

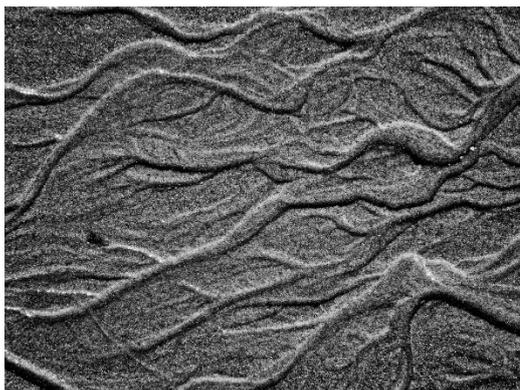


Photo: Sand Patterns by Paul Heinrich

Two new groups have started this month – Art and Tai Chi. In addition to that, the social darts group has attracted a lot of interest and is going strong.

North Walsham u3a has been going for 20 years this year. Details of how you could help are on page 4.

Groups form the heart of the organisation. If you have ideas for new activities, or wish to start one, please get in touch.

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 March 26th**. Please send any comments or articles to me at ralph4ed@hotmail.com.

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Thoughts From the Chair

It has been a pleasure to enjoy the occasional beautifully sunny day and the steadily lengthening daylight hours - a sure sign that spring is just around the corner.

This month has been particularly exciting, as we have welcomed two more new groups, bringing our total to four new groups since the start of the year. Our newest additions are Art and Tai Chi, both of which have already generated great enthusiasm.

I have been privileged to attend all four of our new groups. It has been especially lovely to meet members I had not met before, and I very much hope this is a sign that our new groups are reaching further into our wider membership. It is always encouraging to see new faces getting involved.

Three of the group leaders are running U3A groups for the first time, and they all did an amazing and inspiring job. Their willingness to step forward and share their interests is very much appreciated. I hope their example will encourage other members who have a passion for a particular subject to feel confident about coming forward to lead a group. By doing so, we can continue to broaden the range of opportunities available and ensure our U3A remains vibrant, welcoming and full of choice for everyone.

Please do continue to share your thoughts, views and feedback — they are always very much appreciated and help us to keep improving and moving forward together.

Warm wishes to all

Maureen

Announcements

1. The March monthly meeting on the 6th of March at 2.15pm is the author and broadcaster Christine Weber and will be speaking about Positive Ageing. Christine is a former musical theatre performer and Anglian tv presenter, so great life experience to talk from.

2. The April Monthly Meeting on the 3rd of April is on Good Friday and has been cancelled, due to activities at the church and being a bank holiday weekend. Sue will provide a quiz at an alternative time.

3. Members are warmly invited to a special talk by members of the Reflex Theatre on Friday 13 March in St Benets Hall at 3.15 pm (Free Event) The company will be visiting North Walsham u3a as part of their intergenerational project Call Me John, exploring storytelling, memory and social history.

The project aims to create a “Diary of East Anglia”, gathering real stories and reflections from communities across the region.

The “Call me John” production at the Reflux Theatre is on the 30th of March 2026 at Alysham Town Hall

4. The Big Bash is being held in the North Walsham Community Centre on the 18th of April. The u3a will have a stall here to link with other community groups and potentially recruit new members. Any help or just visits to the event will be welcomed.

Further details will be sent out by email.

Promoting Our U3a And Celebrating Our 20th Anniversary – We Need Your Help!

As some of you may know, I'm now working as Publicity Officer to raise awareness of what our u3a does in the local area. The aim of this is to encourage more people to join.

We have a Facebook page and are sending monthly press releases to North Walsham and Cromer Times, Crab Tales, Just North Walsham and Town and Country News; all seem happy to publish regular reports on what we do. The most recent piece sent out is below.

A working group has also started planning for an open morning at St Benet Hall on Thursday 4th June. We're hoping to offer stalls and photographic display representing our activities, refreshments and much more, but we need your help to make this happen. So, can you...

- Give out leaflets about the open morning in and around the Market Place?
- Welcome people to the event as they arrive?
- Be on a stall where you can talk to members of the public about what we (you) do?
- Provide pictures of our activities?
- Make refreshments?
- Do anything else to help?

Monthly Meeting

From Human Sacrifice to Chocolate Biscuits Without Chocolate

The History of Chocolate, as Told to North Walsham u3a

At their monthly meeting on 6th February, over 70 members of North Walsham u3a heard the fascinating story of chocolate from its ancient origins as a drink given to Inca and Mayan human sacrifices to the many varieties we enjoy today.

The talk, given by Simon Partridge, former North Norfolk District Council Leader and Director of the How Hill Trust at Ludham, was choc-full (sorry!) of obscure and surprising facts worthy of an episode of QI.

The statistics alone were astonishing – over 40 million people involved in cocoa growing and £130 billion of annual sales worldwide including 2½ tons of chocolate sold at Brussels Airport EACH DAY.

Chocolate bars as we know them today were only invented by Fry's in Bristol in the 1850s as a way to use up cocoa butter they had been fined for blocking the drains when they threw it away.

Cadbury's can't export their Cream Eggs (actually invented by Fry's) to America because Hershey's have persuaded the government there to ban imported competition for their (allegedly) 'disgusting' version.

After the talk, Simon chatted to u3a members over tea and biscuits.

The u3a's general meetings are held at Sacred Heart Parish Hall, Kings Arms Street, North Walsham at 2.15 on the first Friday of each month. The guest speaker at the next one on Friday 6th March will be Christine Webber, talking about positive ageing.

NW u3a Groups and Days

Week	Day	Morning	Afternoon
1	Monday	Coffee Morning <i>Richard Nevill</i> 	Jazz Appreciation <i>Jim Costello</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		
	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> 
	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	Walking <i>Chrissie Kimber</i>	
	Wednesday		Knit & Stitch* <i>Brenda Tibbles</i>
	Thursday	Cryptic Crosswords  <i>John Harris-Hall</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 of the month 7.30 pm

News from the Groups

Art Group

The initial taster session for the Art Group took place on the 25th of April 2026 at the Black Swan to 21 members. Stella the Group Leader presented a history of cave paintings from Lascaux, through to Indonesia, Spain, France and other UNESCO sites. The works displayed depicted animals, hands, figures and wonderful colours. Thinking about the stories behind the paintings, the materials used and the historic context was fascinating and informative. We also heard about Happisburgh ancient footprints, Cresswell Crags and Stump Cross Caverns cave art



Stella then offered charcoal and paper for members to use to draw as if they were in those caves, there were great pictures produced and a lot of fun talking about these.

If you would like more information about this group please contact Stella on email: stellashan@talktalk.net

Maureen Cavanagh

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

There were only three of us in the library this month. This did not prevent us from completing the Guardian Quiptic in 30 minutes –our favourite clue from this was



Danger with mist almost coming to a road (6)*

The Times full crossword was also completed with some alacrity, 45 minutes. The Clue of the Day from here was

Try to hear what happens in the autumn, though not at first (9)**

We still have a vacancy in the group. Please contact John Harris–Hall if you are interested.

* Hazard – Haz(e) a rd**Eavesdrop – Leaves drop without the first letter

Ralph Edwards

Current Affairs

Topics discussed this month were:-

Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor's arrest & monarchy generally

Inherited wealth

Starmer & national politics

Liberal/Reform party neck and neck in North Norfolk polls

NHS negligence claims

Student loans

Ralph Edwards



Darts

Slightly reduced number today due to injury etc but fun had by all those playing. Highest single score with 3 darts went to Lindy with 102. Encouragement, tips and scoring given by very helpful staff at Trebles. Next oche is 3rd march at 10.30am.



Trevor Cheeseman

Gardening

When the world seems like it's going to hell in a handbasket, there are always snowdrops. Every year they manage to rise up and glow no matter what the climate chucks at them. It seems to me that their indomitable spirit is more than a harbinger of spring, snowdrops are masters of resolve. And so it was that we found ourselves at Thorpe Market church, admiring the swathes of Galanthus (see pic #4) with placards explaining what plants to expect in each designated areas (see pic #3).

Some of us had bemoaned the fact that our attempts at growing snowdrops resulted in just a handful of flowers (or were chewed by slugs, rodents and deer) whilst others had so many snowdrops, bunches of them could be given away annually – such is the diversity of gardening!

Our botany-guru identified the churchyard's large mature, pleasingly textured, rounded tree as a Holm oak (*Quercus ilex*, see pic #1). I thought it struck quite the evergreen pose in contrast to the many leafless specimens around it. ('Holm' is the old word for 'holly'; so-called because the lower leaves are prickly, helping to keep it off the menu of marauding herbivores.)

One of our gardeners (who took the clever upshot of snowdrops pic #2) recalled how she used to sit on one of the church benches with her back to the wall, basking the sun, looking over the fields whilst red kites hovered on thermals above her head. (Quite the 'Kodak moment'.) Another gardener (our gadget-guru) held a very neat bit of kit allowing him to take pictures at ground level without having to bend over. He held his handy selfie-stick in one hand – a claw holding the mobile phone at one end

with the camera facing outward – whilst his other hand held the remote, ready to press a button to take photos. (See pic #5.) The biting wind and low temperatures drove us all towards the Groveland Restaurant in Roughton (see pic#6). We were the second gardening group to visit that day.

Just before we departed, some of us checked out the well-stocked, lovingly tended garden centre. One of us nabbed a tray of the most heart-lifting heralds of early spring – primula vulgaris – the original pastel yellow primrose. In the same vein as winter snowdrops, these stalwart little plants resolutely beam at us throughout the cooler months, cheering us on as we shift ever closer to the season of full-on bud-burst and regrowth.



Veronica Korczak

Jazz Appreciation



The next u3a Jazz Group meeting is on Monday 2 March at 2pm at St Nicholas Hall North Walsham.

Bill will be exploring the delightful world of Blossom Dearie, perhaps best known in the UK for her appearances on the The Michael Parkinson Show and That Was the Week That Was. We'll also hear about her time in Paris, and her husband, Belgian saxophonist Bobby Jaspar. It should be a fascinating afternoon with plenty of great music.

No jazz knowledge is needed if you'd like to come along. Just send me an email or give me a call.

We meet on the first Monday of each month. A £3 donation helps cover room hire plus tea, coffee and biscuits.

Jim Costello

jamescostello@yahoo.com

Quiz Group

8 of us went to the quiz on Wednesday 25 February- 2 teams of 4.

We did very well on answering questions on a variety of trivia and topics. The best round being on the subject of TV theme tunes. The round of " as the crow flies" proved more difficult, but led to much discussion.

The quiz is held on the last Wednesday of the month starting at 730pm in the Black Swan theatre.

There are spaces for 12 people. If you would like to come or try out the quiz please book a space by contacting Brenda Redding or Karen Fox.

Bredding@tiscali.co.uk

Karen -Dollydaydreams100@hotmail.com

The next quiz is 25 March

Unfortunately the afternoon quiz at the Black Swan has stopped, so there is no longer an afternoon quiz group

Brenda Redding

Tai Chi

The tai chi taster session took place on the 26th of February and 16 people attended. Rachel the teacher and her pupil provided an overview of tai chi and we quickly became involved in practising basic moves and relaxing into the tai chi form. Rachel and her pupil then demonstrated the 24 tai chi form, which was simple stunning and we all watched in silence, at the graceful moves. We finished with qigong, slow movement and deep breaths. There was positive feedback about how the session went and Rachels feedback was that everyone had worked really hard and engaged very well.



Please contact Maureen Cavanagh if you want further information or would like to join.

Maureen Cavanagh

Ten-Pin Bowling

We enjoyed our monthly session of friendly competition, we were visited by Sheila , she wanted to check us out, well I am pleased to say she wants to join us,



she was able to roll a few bowls down to get the feel of play.

She said she hadn't bowled for years, but happily remembered her old skills.

If you too would like to come and join us please do. The cost is £12.00 for 2 hours that includes coffee, or tea half time. The list will be on the raffle table at the monthly meeting, or you can email me diane_mulligan@yahoo.co.uk

📅 12th March at 10.00am is the next date.

All are welcome at our friendly group.

Diane Mulligan.

U3Sings



February's singing group get together was a lot of fun. 🎵 🎶 🎵

We sang the Three Part Round, Dona Nobis Pacem, Guadete, Down By The riverside and finally The Rythm of Life. The "Do Be Do's" in this song caused a lot of laughs!

Come and join us for a free taster session on Thursday 12th March at 1.45pm in The Sacred Heart Church Room, North Walsham. We have an amazing teacher/pianist and the group is very welcoming.



Patsy Tomlinson and Margaret Jeppesen

Wine Appreciation

This month June selected our Wines. We started with a Sparkler from Waitrose early celebration of Valentine's Day. We then switched to Morrison's for an Old World / New World comparison for Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir – the Old World (France) won, particularly the Pinot Noir



in

With our Scores they were:

- 6.9 Cave de Lugny Cremant de Bourgogne Chardonnay £17 Waitrose
- 7.6 Adnams Classic Sauvignon Blanc, Loire Valley, France 2024 12% £11.49
- 7.3 Villa Maria Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough NZ 2024 12.5% £10.50
- 7.9 Grande Selection Pinot Noir, Antonin Rodet, France 2024 12.5% £9.50
- 6.8 Cono Sur Bicicleta Pinot Noir, Chile 2022 12% £7.25

Next month (March 12th) David will be choosing our Wines, and Roy and Eva will be hosting us Cheers !

Roy Tuff

March Walks 2026

Walking Group Coordinator

Chrissie Kimber at rebnikc@btinternet.com



Friday March 13th 10am start approx. 4.5 miles

Leader Jeanne Heal

Start point exact reference will be given nearer the date

It will be Felmingham/North Walsham wood. We can go to Skeyton Goat for lunch afterwards if people wish. The meeting place will be Weaver's Way car park, Church Road Felmingham. The entrance is signed, virtually opposite Papworth farm.

Tuesday March 24th start time 9:30 approx 5.5 miles

Leader Sue Knight

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