
North Walsham u3a Newsletter May 2023



A view of North Walsham showing the area between the Hop Inn and The Shambles with St Nicholas' Church in background, courtesy of the digital photography group. Things are certainly changing in the town centre!

I hope you enjoy the newsletter. We are always looking for ways to improve. Please email your comments or suggestions to me at the address below.

Thanks to all you who have contributed to this month's issue. There are still some groups who have *never* sent a piece for inclusion, and some who regularly send articles. The copy deadline for next month is **Thursday May 25th**.

Please send any comments or articles to me at ralph4ed@hotmail.com.

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Thoughts From the Chair

I had an email this week from a u3a member saying she was going to take a break from our current affairs discussion group for a while because the news is so depressing at the moment. And of course, she's right. It is. Even if you're generally inclined to see your glass as half full rather than half empty, it's still all too easy to worry about the half that doesn't contain water (or another liquid of your choice).

I'd like to be able to say that this piece will reassure you that things aren't as bad as you think they are and that your glass really is half full. But sadly not. In fact, I'm going to add to your worries by highlighting a national crisis of which you might previously have been unaware. It's bell ringers. Or more precisely, a shortage of them for coronation day on 6th May. Apparently, it's traditional for all of the UK's 38,000 church bells to be rung for coronations, but there aren't enough trained bell ringers to do that. In spite of a call for volunteers from the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers last autumn, and ongoing training of new bell ringers, the shortfall is likely to be at least several thousand. There are more details at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/apr/04/bellringer-shortage-king-charles-coronation-looms>

This got me wondering about why the problem might have arisen. It's not pay falling behind the cost of living (bell ringers are normally unpaid volunteers) or long hours (it's mostly just Sundays) or rude customers (there are stone walls and solid oak doors between bell ringers and worshipers). And it's a very sociable activity (unless your church only has one bell) and it's great exercise. So, what's the problem?

Well, apparently, bell ringing is dangerous. Obviously not like juggling chainsaw or working for certain politicians I can't name for legal reasons, but still, dangerous. You don't have to take my word for it. This is the abstract of a serious medical research report on the US government's online National Library of Medicine:

OBJECTIVE: To determine the incidence, aetiology, and outcome of injuries due to bell ringing.

DESIGN: Retrospective review of the last six years' issues of Ringing World, advertisement in Ringing World, and a postal questionnaire sent to 20 active ringing towers.

SUBJECTS: Regular bell ringers.

RESULTS: Seventy nine injuries were identified both from review and by advertisement in Ringing World. The incidence of injury among 221 ringers identified by postal questionnaire was 1.8% a year.

CONCLUSION: Although sonorous, bell ringing can be dangerous and occasionally even fatal. Doctors should be aware of the dangers to which campanologists expose themselves.

So, the deal seems to be: spend a long time learning to be a bell ringer; give up your free time; get paid little or nothing; and risk injury or death in a bell-related accident.

When you look at like that, two things become clear. First, it's pretty obvious why there's a shortage of bell ringers. And second, volunteering to do something for your u3a isn't such a burden after all...

Anyway, whatever your plans for coronation day, I hope you enjoy it. If you're a keen monarchist, that will be easy. Pomp, tradition, bells (on TV if not locally) and lots and lots of cake. If you're a republican or just don't care one way or the other, well, there's still cake. And, seriously, who doesn't like cake?!

Best wishes,

Steve Guratsky,

Chairman, North Walsham u3a

Notices

COVID REMINDER

When planning to attend any face-to-face u3a event, especially an indoor one, please remember that covid, flu and other infectious illnesses are still around and may affect you and other older people badly. Vaccination greatly reduces the risk of serious illness but none of us are indestructible! Therefore, before coming to any face-to-face meeting, you may want to consider whether you are happy to take the risk of being exposed to covid or another illness. In doing so, you should take into account your own personal health and circumstances and those of anyone else you live with. In any case, please stay away if you or someone else in your household has symptoms of an infectious illness. For covid, these include a high temperature, a new continuous cough and the loss or a change to your sense of smell or taste.

GENERAL MEETING, FRIDAY 5TH MAY

Our May general meeting will start at 2.15 on Friday 5th May at the Sacred Heart church hall as usual. The meeting will be a quiz with questions set by Sue Cody. Teams can have up to six members and you'll be able to form teams on the day, so you don't need to find team-mates in advance. There will be prizes for the winning team. Following feedback on last month's experiment of having refreshments at the beginning of the meeting, the committee has decided to do the same thing again in May, but with attendees collecting their refreshments as they arrive to help avoid queues. We're aiming to start serving at about 1.45. We've also decided to celebrate the coronation by providing cake rather than biscuits this time.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO HELP WITH REFRESHMENTS AT GENERAL MEETINGS

Each month at our Friday general meetings, we need help with refreshments. Brenda Redding has kindly agreed to organise this, but we need more volunteers to help. If you think you can do this, please tell a committee member at a general meeting or send us a message at: <https://www.northwalshamu3a.org/contact-us>

VIRTUAL U3A

The Virtual U3A (vU3A) is a great way to find and develop new interests and make friends online. You can meet people with similar interests, learn new things, share your skills, keep your mind active and have fun. Whoever you are, wherever you live and whatever your circumstances – vU3A provides opportunities for you to continue your creative, educational and social activities online. All you need to take part is a computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone, an internet connection and a web browser. And a comfortable chair and a drink of your choice!

To allow members to work together on projects of shared interest we provide opportunities to take part in online chats and discussions.

You can find out more at: <https://vu3a.org.uk/>

Coffee Mornings on Zoom

Richard Nevill is still hosting coffee mornings on Zoom at 11.00 each Monday. They're open to all members and are a great chance to have a friendly chat over a cuppa. If you'd like to join in, contact Richard at ricnev@gmail.com and ask to be included in invitation emails.

Group Alerts

Robert & Judith Last are keen to start a **chess** group at their house in Aldborough. This will be held on Thursday afternoons and they can accommodate up to 8 people. Contact judith.last@gmail.com

Book group are looking for more members. Read their write up of the last meeting below. If you fancy it, contact via the website or Yvonne Dickinson at dickinsonyvonne@yahoo.com

Digital Music want more members. Contact via the website or Richard Nevill at ricnev@gmail.com

Pickleball is becoming an increasing popular game (see last month's Third Age Matters magazine. The committee are wondering if we could start a group in North Walsham u3a. If you are interested in joining or organising such a group, please get in touch via the website.

Interest Group Summary 28/04/2023

Group	Face to Face	Zoom	Not Meeting	Notes	Contact
Art Appreciation	X	-	-		
Book Group	X	-	-		
Brain Games	X	-	-		
Computing	-	X	-		
Croquet	X	-	-		
Cryptic Crosswords	X	-	-		
Current Affairs	X	-	-		
Cycling	X	-	-		
Digital Photography	X	-	-		
Family History	-	X	-		
Folk Music	X	-	-		
Gardening 2	X	-	-		
History	X	-	-		
Jazz Appreciation	X	-	-		
Knit and Stitch	X	-	-		
Mac Users	-	X	-		
Mah Jong	X	-	-		
Mind, Body, Spirit	X	-	-		
Organic Allotment	X	-	-		
Painting & Drawing	-	-	X		
Poetry	X	-	-		
Rock'n'Pop	X	-	-		
Scrabble	X	-	-		
Ten Pin Bowling	X	-	-		
The Big Question	X	-	-		
U3 Sings	X	-	-		
Walking	X	-	-		
Wine Appreciation	X	-	-		

Groups correct at 28 April 2023

NW u3a Groups and Days

Week	Day	Morning	Afternoon
1	Monday	Coffee Morning	Jazz Appreciation Croquet
	Tuesday		
	Wednesday		Mac Users
	Thursday		Digital Photography Mind, Body, Spirit
	Friday		Monthly meeting

2	Monday	Coffee Morning	Croquet
	Tuesday		
	Wednesday		
	Thursday	Ten Pin Bowling	Book Group U3Sings Wine Appreciation
	Friday		History

3	Monday	Coffee Morning	Committee Meeting
	Tuesday		Gardening
	Wednesday		Art Appreciation Rock & Pop
	Thursday	Current Affairs	Computer Group
	Friday	The Big Question	Brain Games Scrabble Mah Jong

4	Monday	Coffee Morning Painting & Drawing	Folk Music
	Tuesday	Cycling	Classical Music Cycling Poetry‡
	Wednesday		Knit & Stitch*
	Thursday	Cryptic Crosswords	
	Friday	Walking Family History **	

*Last Wednesday of the month

**Last Friday of every other month starting September

‡Last Tuesday of each month

News from the Groups

Allotment

The allotment is still going strong, although the cold weather has rather set us back. Hopefully, as we move into May, warmth will return, although not quite the drought that we had last year!

Three varieties of potatoes have been planted, as well as onions, garlic and broad beans, all of which are going strongly, despite the chill.

Of particular note, however, is the asparagus which I planted two years ago. We had our first crop from it and it was plump and delicious in a quiche. These liliaceous plants will continue cropping for six weeks for the next twenty years or so, and are well worth the wait.

Ralph Edwards

Art Appreciation

We met this month to watch an excellent film about George Seurat's large canvas, 'An Afternoon at the Grande Jatte', painted in 1884 and hanging in The Art Institute of Chicago, where people go to see this painting in particular. Interesting discussion followed, exchanging views on Seurat's technique, his impact on other artists, those who influenced him, as well as hotly debated remarks on what have been seen as controversial interpretations of the subject matter. This masterpiece took him two years to complete.

Myra Burgess

Book Group

"The Silence of the Girls" by Pat Barker. Set during the time of the Trojan Wars, this was told through the voice of a young woman taken as a slave by the Greeks. It was not for the squeamish as there were graphic descriptions of the bloodshed and atrocities done. The book had a mixed reception from group members. After discussion of the book we awarded three eights (out of ten), one three and some in-betweeners! Average- a respectable 6!

We also had a little time to discuss Antony Horowitz's "Magpie Murders", which is being televised at the moment, and the role of "Sensitivity Editors" in literature.

We are a small, but perfectly formed, group of seven at the moment but would welcome new members. Please give us a go if you are interested in a challenging read and the opportunity to discuss with like-minded people. Up until last month I we could have offered you tea and biscuits but the library, where we meet, no longer have a hot drinks trolley, so bring your own drink ... but... we could still offer biscuits!!!!"

Yvonne Dickinson

Cryptic Crosswords

The cryptic crossword group had its monthly meeting and welcomed Diana as a new member. Six of us tackled a Guardian "Quiptic" and then progressed to a Times cryptic. Unusually, we found the, supposedly easier, "Quiptic" harder than the Times crossword this month. The usual lively discussion as to how to solve these puzzles ensued. We had a few MERs* and PDMs** but finished both in about an hour and a quarter.

One answer was "CATAWBA" (nope, me neither!)[†]

We could probably accommodate one other person at the library before needing to move so, if you are interested in joining our great group, don't leave it too late to contact me via U3A Beacon.

*Minor Eyebrow Rise (ie: not sure the clue completely worked).

**Penny Dropped Moment (suddenly the solution to a difficult clue came after much deliberation and was easy in retrospect)."

John Harris-Hall

[†] It's a variety of grape and the wine made from it. We got it from the word play in the clue and looked it up on a smartphone. The name comes from the Catawba river in the USA (ed)

Digital Photography

This was the first meeting of the 'Summer' program and a cold, rainy and blowy one it was. Seven members assembled outside Café Kitale to explore and take pictures of the St Nicholas's church and the Town Centre.

Bob, the Group Leader and excursion organiser, gave a few words of encouragement along the lines of "it's clearing up and we'll have a wonderful time" broke the group into two, both going opposite ways to see what they could.

Group one consisted of the girls who took the sensible option of going directly inside the church to explore and take photos; group two consisting of the men and Bob's wife Fiona, went to view the mural to Lauren Hemp. Impressive in the detail.



The Mural of Lauren Hemp

The group then made it's way towards the newly refurbished Market Place and the tail end of the Thursday market. On the subject of the weather Bob could not have been more wrong as the rain returned with impressive effort starting as a mild drizzle and turning into a downpour.



View from Market Place to St Nicholas



The Thursday Market packing up



St Nicholas Church

The group agreed that the cover of the church was preferred and so they joined the girls in exploring the wonders of the stained-glass windows and additions for Maundy and Easter.

After a short conference a command decision was made and the group retired for coffee; making it way to Swallows Café for, what turned out to be the better half of the outing, a cup of coffee and a chat.

It just shows that the weather commands and you have to just go with it.



Group photo to commemorate the day



Gathering at Swallows Cafe

In May, the group outing will be to Norwich. Shelia is leading this outing with Richard giving administrative backup.

Bob Shortis

Family History

Peter gave a presentation to our March meeting with a potted history of the development of newspapers and what we can gain for family history research from press archives. Some of our ancestors may have been local dignitaries through business or service to the community, whilst others may have had to go to Court for misdemeanours. Whichever, their names and circumstances are likely to have appeared in local newspapers and occasionally in the 'nationals'. As time goes by more and more of the press archives are becoming available on the internet and can be a very valuable resource for family historians. A useful and very interesting meeting.

David Fitzhugh

Gardening

This month the group got together to help one of our members get his garden ready for Spring. We did some weeding, planting, installed a trellis - and had a fun afternoon in the sunshine. It was a bit chilly but we kept moving!

Thanks John and Jackie for delicious cakes and tea when we had finished.



Ronnie Cooke

Ten Pin Bowling

We had a very enjoyable morning with our fellow bowlers, three new members joined us, I hope they had a fun experience. Our band is growing we now need three rinks to cover our needs.

Our next date is 11th May at 10.00am, at "Strikers" it will cost £9.95p for 2 hours, which includes coffee or tea halfway.

If you wish to come please email diane_mulligan@yahoo.co.uk

Can you also state whether you prefer tea or coffee

Diane Mulligan

U3Sings

It was lovely to be back with the singing group after my holidays and I would like to thank Margaret for running the group in my absence. Thank you also to all those who have taken a turn to bring refreshments. Today, after our warmup exercises, we completed 'Bring Me Sunshine' in two parts although we haven't added the Morecambe and Wise exit routine to it (yet!) We then sang in three parts (soprano, alto and baritone) to 'You'll Never Walk Alone'. Some of you will know this from the musical Carousel, some will remember Gerry & The Pacemakers singing it and others will know it as the Liverpool football club anthem. We also started to learn the three parts to 'The Windmills of Your Mind' and the Ralph McTell piece 'Streets of London'. We meet again on Thursday 11th May 2-4pm in the Catholic Church Hall, North Walsham and everyone is welcome.

Jayne Potter

Wine Appreciation

This month Ben Thompson of CH Wines provided an interesting selection of Spanish single-varietal Wines. Particularly the Palamino with no fining / filtration. We also learned about 'Goblet-Pruning'

https://www.vineas.net/en/7_114/5c332f7d07c805cd14cf6049/Vineyard%20resistance%20to%20Drought%3A%20goblet%20pruning%20bush%20vines.html

The Scores, Grapes and Wines were:

6.9 Mersuaguera – Bodegas Alejandro, Merseguera, Vega Cuyar, Alicante, Spain – 13.5%, £11

7.6 Palamino – Hacienda la Parrilla Alta, El Pinto, Cadiz – 12%, £10.54

7.6 Monastrell – Bodegas Alejandro, Monastrell, Bilaire, Alicante, Spain – 14.5%, £11

7.6 Bobal – Bodegas Volvar, Madame Bobalu, Valencia, Spain – 13.5%, £8.79

Next month June is selecting Italian Wines from the Wine Society

Cheers !

May Walks 2023

Walking Group Coordinator

Chrissie Kimber at rebnikc@btinternet.com

2 walks this month they are both in the same week

Tuesday 23rd Ebridge walk

No set leader as this has become a monthly occasion now

Start location Ebridge Mill car park, Happisburgh Road, post code NR28 9NG.

Meet in the car park at 10 am and we walk to Honing Village Hall where they have a pop up coffee morning so we get a break half way. Refreshments are on sale CASH only please

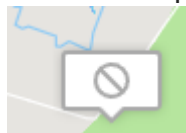
Wednesday 24th Bluebell Walk 10am start approx. 3-4 miles

Walk Leader Chrissie Kimber rebnikc@btinternet.com mobile 07880 238 958

If you have National Trust membership you will be able to park for free (if you have your card with you)

Others of us will have to pay £5!!!

It's the car park on this map with this symbol



Hopefully we will be able to eat afterwards at the Buckinghamshire Arms

So let chrissie know by email before 1st May if you require lunch as the table will need to be booked for 12 midday

<https://www.bucksarms.co.uk/>

National Trust

Woodgate

Mill Lane

Blickling



And Finally – Some More News You Might Have Missed....

Once again, here's selection of recent this month's weird and sometimes wonderful news stories. starting with some local news...

'Microcosm of Brexit Britain': Norfolk documentary is surprise German hit

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/mar/29/brexit-britain-norfolk-cromer-documentary-seaside-special-germany-hit>

And of course some animal stories...

Uptown skunk! Why is the notoriously stinky animal on the loose in London?

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/mar/29/uptown-skunk-why-is-the-notoriously-stinky-animal-at-loose-in-london>

US police escorting ducklings caught on bodycam <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-us-canada-65144802>

Snake on a plane forces South African pilot to make emergency landing

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/apr/05/snake-on-a-plane-forces-south-african-pilot-to-make-emergency-landing>

'It's all paid off': a prize-winning guinea pig takes high standards and great hair

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/apr/14/its-all-paid-off-a-prize-winning-guinea-pig-takes-high-standards-and-great-hair>

And a warning about the dangers of online shopping...

Strawberries instead of bin liners: poll reveals strange supermarket delivery substitutions

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/mar/25/strawberries-instead-of-bin-liners-poll-reveals-strange-supermarket-delivery-substitutions>

And to conclude, some great pictures...

I thought I was immune to being fooled online. Then I saw the pope in a coat

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/mar/27/pope-coat-ai-image-baby-boomers>

Northern lights dazzle in parts of UK overnight <https://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/features/65061790>

A life less ordinary: Roger Bamber's state of the nation – in pictures

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2023/apr/04/a-life-less-ordinary-roger-bambers-state-of-the-nation-in-pictures>

This picture of (apparently) the world's biggest wave was taken at Is Nazaré in Portugal. If you look just to the right of the middle of the picture, you can see a surfer!



If you want to share a news story with other North Walsham u3a members, send a message through the website at: <https://www.northwalshamu3a.org/contact-us>