
North Walsham u3a Newsletter September 2023



Who's knocking on the door? Opportunities abound to try something new with your local u3a. If you are one of those people who think that 'the u3a' should be doing this or that, please remember that it is run by volunteers. If you have an interest and/or expertise in a particular area, or have enjoyed going to groups run by somebody else, why not take a leadership role or start a new group? Several groups have closed recently because their leaders have felt that they have done enough – is it time for you to step up to the plate?

Group opportunities are detailed on pages 5 & 6 of this newsletter.

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 September 28th**.

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

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Thoughts From the Chair

This month, I need to start with what might be called a trigger warning. This piece does regrettably contain a little bit of politics, but don't worry; nothing I'm going to say will make the state of the world or your experience of it any worse than it already is. (Which you might think is more than some politicians can claim, but I couldn't possibly comment.)

On 3rd August, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Mel Stride, visited the London HQ of Deliveroo. I was surprised to read about this because I thought the whole point of Deliveroo is that they come to you. But no, it wasn't a mistake. Mr. Stride had gone there to say that, 'Cash-strapped over-50s should ditch age-related stereotypes and consider flexible jobs like delivering takeaways'. And he made his remarks at Deliveroo because it has seen a 62% increase in delivery bike riders aged over 50 since 2021. (Editor's note: Other food delivery services are available.)

Now, as some of you will know, I am occasionally a tiny bit cynical about politicians' motives, especially those in Mr. Stride's party. So, my initial reaction was to dismiss his speech as part of a Scrooge-inspired plot to save money on older people's benefits and reduce NHS waiting lists with a 'kill or cure' exercise regime for older patients.

But no. Hot on the heels of Mr. Stride's trip to Deliveroo, the impeccably left-of-centre Guardian has run an article warmly recommending 'unretirement' as a way to reduce poverty, loneliness and labour shortages and another profiling people over 50 who had trained as teachers after the end of their previous careers.

Now, when a Conservative government minister and the Guardian agree on something, you have to take it seriously and we retired people might just have to get used to the idea of working for a living again. Or possibly not...

The thing is, people generally retire because they **want** to. And whatever their reasons for retiring were, it's quite likely they still make sense. If you have friends and enough money to live on and are in reasonable health, retirement is just really **nice**. You can spend all your time doing things you enjoy and not doing any of the things you used to do at work that weren't fun. So, for lots of older people, the idea of 'unretirement' is quite like NHS dental treatment in North Walsham – not much fun but you don't need to worry because there's not much chance of it happening anytime soon.

The other problem with 'unretirement' is that older people wouldn't necessarily be very good at the jobs that are available. Of course, it **can** work well. If you've been to B&Q recently, you may have noticed that lots of the staff seem to be over retirement age and getting on just fine. But, not every retired person can do the jobs that are available, even if they want to. How many of you could work in health or social care, drive a truck, pick fruit or deliver pizzas on a bike? Or indeed serve 'Two soups' in a restaurant? (If you've no idea what I'm referring to here, watch this video on YouTube: <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=599177313839263>.)

So, in a spirit of compromise, I'd like to suggest that some older people **could** (and maybe should) use their time more productively, but not necessarily in return for pay. Rather, they could help to run a u3a as a volunteer. They could be a group leader, a refreshments maker, a committee member or anything else that will help it carry on making retirement nicer than working. And just by chance, I have a u3a that I'm very happy to provide details of if you'd like to get more involved... (Another editor's note: Other volunteering opportunities are available.)

Best wishes,

Steve Guratsky,

Chairman, North Walsham u3a

Notices

General Meeting, Friday 1st September

Our September general meeting will start at 2.15 on Friday 1st September. The guest speaker will be Charlotte Paton and she will be talking about 'The history of the Romany People'. Please note that the venue will be **ST BENET HALL** next to St. Nicholas's church. This is because our usual venue, the Sacred Heart church hall is undergoing repairs. There is no parking at St. Benet Hall, but you may use the car park at Sacred Heart if you wish, or any of the other car parks nearby.

Sacred Heart Church Hall and Alternatives

As you may know, Sacred Heart church hall has recently had a water leak and will not be available for bookings until at least the beginning of September. While repairs are being carried out, monthly Friday general meetings will be relocated to St Benet Hall next to St. Nicholas's church when possible but will otherwise be cancelled. There will be updates on the situation in each newsletter.

Groups that normally use Sacred Heart church hall will need to find alternative venues or ways of meeting while repairs are continuing. These might include:

- Meeting in members' homes (or gardens if the weather is nice!)
- St Nicholas church's adjacent meeting rooms, St Nicholas Room and St Benet Hall. They're suited to a range of meetings and activities and both have kitchen facilities. The rooms have a shared entrance, with accessible toilet facilities. The booking fee is around £23 for a morning or afternoon. For further information, checking availability and halls bookings, please contact the Halls Manager Mrs Ann Herd (01692 402705) or annherdb.ed@gmail.com
- North Walsham Community Centre
- North Walsham Library (which is happy to host smaller groups that want to meet and talk and doesn't charge)
- Trips to relevant places of interest
- Meeting on Zoom (Richard Nevill may be able to act as Zoom host and can be contacted at ricnev@gmail.com)

Volunteers Needed To Help With Refreshments At General Meetings

Each month at our Friday general meetings, we need help with refreshments. 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>

Membership Renewals

Many thanks to everyone who has renewed their membership for 2023-24. If you haven't yet done so, please do it as soon as possible. The cost is unchanged and an absolute bargain at £15 for full members and £12 for associate members for the year.

If possible, please make your payment by bank transfer to:

Payee name: North Walsham u3a

Account number: 00852956

Sort code: 30-96-16

Payment reference: Your name and membership number

If you are only able to pay by cheque, please make it payable to **North Walsham u3a** and write your name and membership number of the back. Cheques should be sent to Dave Audley at 61 Lynfield Road, North Walsham, NR28 0SW.

We won't be issuing new membership cards but we will send you an email or letter confirming that you are a member for 2023-24 once we have received your payment.

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 should 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.

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.

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/>

Technology Groups – Mac or PC – Dates and times as per Nwu3a website: Mac:

<https://www.northwalshamu3a.org/mac-users> PC: <https://www.northwalshamu3a.org/computing>

Currently we meet via Zoom as we find it a convenient way of conducting technical discussions with the added benefit that we can share screens to explain details. Every now and then, I ask the group members if they'd like to meet at a physical location, but they're happy to continue to Zoom.

I tend to do a bit of poking around each month to find a particular new feature, facility or program to focus our discussion on. I like it when people email me questions prior to the meeting as this means we can discuss real world technical issues. Sometimes, when there are major technology developments, I like to do a resumé of these for the group. We always allow time at the meetings for an on the day Q&A session and I maintain that no Q is too basic – all of us learn a little from the A's to basic Q's!

I'm also happy to get questions from any NWu3a member, even if they're not in one of these technology groups – don't let the techie stuff worry you as there's often a simple solution once you share the problem!

I also like to advise the groups about some of the very good on-line tutorials, blogs and podcasts that I've discovered – if there's anything particularly interesting I might show a snippet during the meeting, or even present my own tutorial.

Some while ago we had more structured courses exploring a selection of the major features of Macs or PCs. I've recently been thinking of resurrecting these courses to encompass a raft of new features introduced in recent Operating System updates.

These technology groups are your groups so any suggestions about what you'd like from them will be gratefully received. If you'd like to know more, get in touch and I'll send you an invitation to join one of our next Zoom meetings.

ricnev@gmail.com

RUT-BUSTERS!!

Why are we stuck in ruts? Why don't people want to try new things?

When new groups are offered in this newsletter, the response has been pretty dire. Surely one of the main reasons for joining the u3a is to expand our horizons and continue with active, life-long learning, but it seems that people are frightened of trying something new.

Perhaps we need a dialogue to explore these issues? How can we conduct that dialogue? Answers on a postcard to the Editor perhaps? But seriously, there are plenty of modern communication channels we can use to discuss how we might re-invigorate our u3a with fresh ideas.

Use your voice – tell us what YOU think!

Canva

Here is an example 500 word article:

Article created with the help of Microsoft Bing AI

Canva is a free graphic design platform that allows you to easily create visual content for various purposes, such as invitations, business cards, flyers, lesson plans, Zoom backgrounds, videos, logos and more. You can use Canva's professionally designed templates or start from scratch with your own photos and graphics. You can also collaborate with others on your projects and share them online or download them in different formats.

Canva has a simple and intuitive drag and drop interface that lets you customise your designs with fonts, colours, filters, stickers, animations and music. You can access Canva from your web browser or download the app for your mobile device. Canva also offers a Canva Pro subscription that gives you access to more features, such as premium templates, media, fonts and storage. You can also use Canva for Teams to create professionally effective brand assets (marketing-speak for 'look and feel') and work with your team members on larger projects.

Canva is a great tool for anyone who wants to create stunning and professional-looking visual content without any design skills or experience. Whether you need to make a presentation, a social media post, a video collage or anything else, Canva can help you do it with ease. You can get started with Canva for free by signing up on their website or downloading their app.

If you'd like to participate in a short course to see how Canva might be useful to you, get in touch with **Richard Nevill**.

Group Alerts

Proposed new Groups

Any members interested in forming a 'home technology' group with me ?

A group where we can meet in each others homes, once a month over the 'wintry' 6 months of the year.
A group who can share, show and learn from each other in respect of all the latest home technology available for both entertainment and everyday domestic use. Looking at –

bluetooth
remote control
voice activated devices
security cameras
useful mobile phone apps
and drink tea !

If you are interest, please email me creakeman@btinternet.com

with your name, preferred email address and interests. I will attempt to answer any questions . A limit of 6–8 members max.

Other Group Alerts

Poetry is still in need of a new leader

Croquet has a similar problem

The group leader of **Family History** is stepping aside after many years. They will need a new leader from January

Interest Group Summary

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	X	-	-		
History	X	-	-		
Jazz Appreciation	X	-	-		
Knit and Stitch	X	-	-		
Mac Users	-	X	-		
Mah Jong	X	-	-		
Mind, Body, Spirit	X	-	-		
Organic Allotment	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 01 September 2023

NW u3a Groups and Days

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

2	Monday	Coffee Morning	
	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	Folk Music
	Tuesday	Cycling	Cycling
	Wednesday		Knit & Stitch*
	Thursday	Cryptic Crosswords	
	Friday	Walking	Family History**

* Last Wednesday of the month

** Last Friday of the month

News from the Groups

Art Appreciation

I hate Maths, always have – can't do it. But I turned up to the August meeting to hear Ralph explain about how maths influences art.

I've done an art degree so I know a bit about the structure of paintings but he explained the Golden Ratio and the Golden Triangle showing examples of the uses of both in composing paintings. One particular example was using the golden ratio to position elements of a simple composition.

The second part of the presentation, on perspective and vanishing points, caused problems with some of us. There were a lot of questions and discussions with a cup of tea and a biscuit after the talk.

This was an interesting and unusual presentation

Mave Edwards

Book Group

This month's book, "The Colour of Milk" by Nell Leyshon, took us back to rural England of the 1800s. Mary, a young woman who has spent most of her life working on her father's farm with her family, has been hired out to the local vicar to look after his invalid wife, with consequences! Mary is writing the story so there is little punctuation and the prose is plain and heartfelt. We felt it reflected the hardship of the times and particularly how hard it was to be a young woman. Not an uplifting book, but it was honest and thought-provoking. I personally thought it was a gem of a book. It achieved an average score of 8/10, one mark of four was given but the rest were high marks. Go read it and decide for yourselves!

Yvonne Dickinson

Coffee Mornings

Richard Neville 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

Four of us met in N. Walsham library this month. Due to one of us being on solving fire, we finished our usual two crosswords in record time. This left us twiddling our thumbs until we persuaded our stand-in leader (I'm not allowed to mention his name, but here's a clue: "Music type with port-side initial headed north towards home", 5 letters) to ask the librarian to help him download another puzzle. This turned out to be a Guardian Thursday special, which, I was glad to discover, was all about bears! We managed to finish this with just a little bit of cheating at the end, and all left happily remembering our childhood friends and sexy one-piece underwear (called "teddies", in case you are wondering).

Diana Barker

Current Affairs

This month's topics were: –

TV coverage of sport – is it too much? Particularly in regard to football

Peter Malkinson – this case appears to reveal a complete failure of the criminal justice system

Bibby Stockholm Barge – seems to be a bit of a mess. There were questions about what the government were trying to achieve

A Level results – Steve explained in some detail how the system was administered led to a general discussion about grades and how to assess progress

Ralph Edwards

Digital Photography

It's Summer, school holidays, and lots of members had other things to do (grandchildren and holidays were mentioned), so it was a select few who assembled in the Market Square in Aylsham for the August outing.



Cl: Information Board Aylsham church

You probably know **Aylsham**; it's an historic market town some 8 or 9 miles from North Walsham, close to the Blickling National Trust Estate.



RS: Aylsham Church

The main attractions being the Church, mainly dating from the 13th or 14th centuries with notable additions, the churchyard and the lanes around; the market square (mostly Georgian); Budgens Supermarket; Aylsham station of the *Bure Valley Railway*; Tesco Superstore (the "greenest in the world"); Biddy's Kitchen, a very quirky tea shop; Flour & Bean and Bread Source bakeries; the Black Boys Public House and Restaurant (one of Aylsham's oldest surviving buildings); and the Town Hall. There is also a thatched waterpump (built in 1911 at Carr's Corner in memory of John Soame), its canopy is thatched in Norfolk reed.



RS: Thatched Waterpump

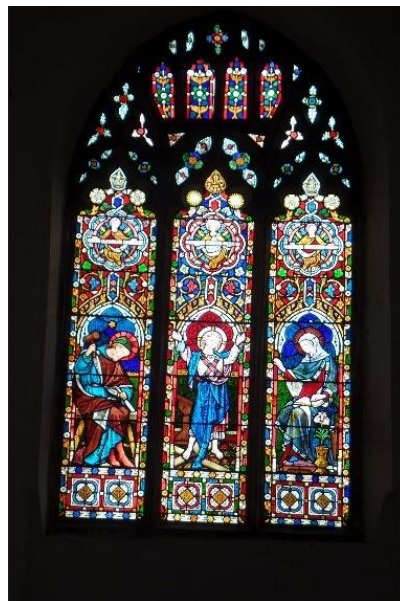


CI: View of Aylsham Church

So, there were four of us in attendance and after congratulating ourselves on the fact that it was not raining and gaining the lie of the land, we wandered off. Firstly, to the Church; St Michael and All Angels, a fine example of Gothic architecture of the Decorated style.



RS: Church Organ Pipes



RS: Stained Glass Organ - 01



RS: Stained Glass Window – 02

Where a few pictures were taken of the fine stained-glass windows, the general internal architecture and organ.



RS: Lych Gate



SC: A grave

Then out to the church yard and the generality of the church building and the building surrounding, my favourite being the Lychgate which 'guards' the path through the churchyard, which I learned from the visitor's centre (adjacent to the church) was formerly the main road from Norwich to Cromer.

The group had broken up, each going our separate ways, I with Clive, explored the lanes lying outside the church; very substantial fine late Georgian buildings. The lanes lead us to the market square where we met with the others of the group.



RS: Fox Door Knocker - Biddy's Kitchen



RS: Narrow Passage



RS: Aylsham Town Hall



RN: The Cakes are Behind You!

It by this time being midafternoon, after a short conference a command decision was made and the group retired to 'Bread Source' for refreshments of the coffee and cake kind.

The next outing for the Group will be to Cromer on Thursday 7th September 2023.
If you care to join us you will be most welcome. Hope to see you there.

Bob Shortis

Jazz Appreciation

We are all looking forward to the next session of the Jazz Group on Monday September 11th as Janet has volunteered to tell us about two marvellous pianists, Jacques Loussier & Dave Brubeck. Whilst Loussier specialised in jazzing up classical pieces Brubeck is best known for some memorable melodies like 'Take Five'. It should be an interesting afternoon of musical contrasts.

The North Walsham U3A Jazz Group will meet at the St Nicholas Room, behind the church starting at 2pm on Monday September 11th. We ask for a donation of £2 per meeting towards the hire of the room & for tea/coffee & some biscuits.

If you need any further details about our Jazz Group get in touch via the website

Jim Costello

Ten Pin Bowling

Sadly there was no meeting this month, so we look forward to September 14th 10.00am
So we hope to see everybody at "Strikers" raring to have fun.

For those who are new the cost is £9.95 for two hours including a cup of coffee or tea.

We are a friendly group, all are welcome to come along. If you wish to come please put yourself on the list, which will be by the notice board at the monthly meeting. Or you can get in touch via the website

Diane Mulligan

September Walks 2023

Walking Group Coordinator

Tuesday 12th September 10:00 am start approx. 5.5 miles

Leader Chrissie Kimber contact 07880 238 958

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. Proceeds this month in aid of the MacMillan charity **Cash only**

Thursday 21st September 10:00 am start approx. 4 miles

Leader Trevor Cheeseman

Starting at the Bure Valley Rail station car park Buxton (end of Stracey Road) NR10 5ET.

If going for lunch afterwards. The village pub is not open at lunchtime so the nearest venue would be the Goat at Skepton

Wednesday 27th September 5.5 mile walk

Leader Chrissie Kimber

Start point end of Mundesley Road 16:00. There is a cul-de-sac with plenty of parking.

Addresses in Mundesley road have the Postcode NR28 ODD with curry afterwards for those who wish to partake

"Be yourself; everyone else is already taken."—Oscar Wilde

And Finally – Some News You May Have Missed....

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

This month, we start with a selection of stories about people doing interesting, clever and/or impressive things and in one case just being a bit silly (you can decide which the one)...

Ex-paratrooper completes 19,000-mile UK coastline walk, raising £500,000

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/jul/29/ex-paratrooper-chris-lewis-completes-19000-mile-walk-around-uk-coast-raising-500000-charity>

Why has an entrepreneur spent £25,000 on a disused staircase?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-66369705>

This 93-year-old went to all 63 US national parks

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/world-us-canada-66344539>

US scientists turn old plastic into soap after fireside inspiration

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/aug/10/scientists-turn-old-plastic-into-soap-polyethylene-fatty-acids-pollution>

Forty days, 117 buses, 1,650 miles: man completes charity trip round England

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/aug/12/watford-man-travels-1650-miles-around-england-by-bus>

'We turn waste into something golden': the creatives transforming rags to riches

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2023/aug/16/textile-waste-landfill-creatives-transform-rags-to-riches-upcycling-ghana-chile-pakistan>

Full of beans: scientists use processed coffee grounds to make stronger concrete

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2023/aug/23/full-of-beans-scientists-use-processed-coffee-grounds-to-make-stronger-concrete>

No longer bog standard: how loo roll became a UK status symbol

<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2023/jul/28/how-loo-roll-became-a-status-symbol-toilet-paper>

And we move inevitably on to some animal stories...

Border terrier makes incredible journey 100 miles across Switzerland

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/04/lucky-border-terrier-makes-incredible-journey-100-miles-across-switzerland>

Whipsnade zoo 'ecstatic' at birth of endangered red panda twins

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/02/whipsnade-zoo-ecstatic-at-birth-of-endangered-red-panda-twins>

Hank the Tank: Fugitive burglar bear captured in California

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-66429736>

Cats: The mum and daughter living with more than 70 pets

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-66451560>

And (really) finally, a beautiful collection photographs on the BBC News website on the theme of 'summer walks'...

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-66514232>

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](#)