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# North Walsham u3a Newsletter March 2024

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The word companion derives from Latin *Com pain* – literally ‘with bread’. Whilst most groups do not break bread together, most have a break for a drink and a biscuit. We in the North Walsham u3a aim to provide companionship along with an enjoyable time.

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. It’s nice to receive everybody’s contributions, particularly from those who have not previously sent articles. The copy deadline for next month is **Thursday March 28th**.

Please send any comments or articles to me at [ralph4ed@hotmail.com](mailto:ralph4ed@hotmail.com).

## *In this month’s issue*

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# Thoughts From the Chair

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As some of you may know, I'm a bit of a news junkie. Every day, I read newspapers and tune in to TV and radio news. I'm even in two different u3a current affairs discussion groups.

Given all the terrible things happening in the world, this might sound depressing, and sometimes it is. But it also means that I stumble across little gems of good news as well. Some of these find their way into the 'And finally...' section at the end of newsletters and others give me ideas for Thoughts from the Chair.

One such happiness-inducing story was about people who go 'toading'. (If you're now thinking about something you could be arrested for, that's in your mind and nothing to do with me!) Apparently, it involves staying up all night putting toads in buckets and carrying them across roads where they might otherwise be squished by cars. (And yes, as you ask, they do actually want to cross the road and no, they don't immediately hop back across it to where they started from.)

The full story is here:

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/feb/19/you-want-them-to-have-a-fighting-chance-the-world-of-toading>

Some of you maybe thinking this is all a bit eccentric, and I would agree with you. Losing sleep to look after your new baby is one thing, but to provide a taxi service for a load of amphibians with bad skin? Really?! Babies are officially cute and, even when they're not, biologists tell us we're hard wired to look after them so our genes are passed on through another generation. Toads on the other hand are neither cute nor carry our genes. So what in the sacred name of David Attenborough is going on? Well, if you want my opinion (of course you do, or you wouldn't still be reading this), it's just kindness. People get pleasure from being kind, even to toads. And what's wrong with that? Nothing at all, obviously. It's a win for the toads and for the people who help them.

By chance, another story I stumbled across recently was also about kindness. It was about Random Acts of Kindness Week from 11<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> February. The idea is really very simple. You just do nice things for other people. That's it. And there are lots of examples on the website and they even provide lesson plans for teachers to use in schools. You can find full details at <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/>.

I should probably confess at this point that my typical view of the world leans somewhat towards the jaded and the cynical. I wouldn't go as far as to say that (pre-ghost) Ebenezer Scrooge is actually my role model, but I do think he displayed a refreshing level of objectivity and honesty in his approach to life. So, in that spirit(!) of healthy scepticism, I do wonder about a few things.

Firstly, why do people need to be told to be kind or how to do it? Clearly, some don't. Lots are already kind without being told and some are even kind to toads, apparently. Still, if a few more people take the hint and start being nicer, I'm certainly not going to complain.

Second, why do we need a specific week in which to be kind? What about the other 51? Surely, we could manage a bit of kindness throughout the year? Or, if that's too much, maybe two weeks could be allocated to each letter of the alphabet and people whose names begin with the relevant letter asked to be kind for 'their' two weeks. The extra kindness might be a bit unevenly spread through the year, with not much of it around in the 'X' and 'Z' weeks. And I'm not sure how it would work in countries that don't use the 26 letter Latin alphabet, such as China, Japan, Arabic-speaking countries, etc. But I'm sure you get the general idea.

Third, isn't it a bit late to tell you about Random Acts of Kindness Week from 11<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> February? Well, yes and no. You can be kind at any time of the year (see above), so it's not too late at all. And, if you really do need to be told when to be kind, World Kindness Day is on 13<sup>th</sup> November, so put in your diary and start planning some kindness now. After all, it's in the week after the US presidential election, so we might all need a bit of extra niceness then!

Best wishes,

Steve Guratsky,

Chairman, North Walsham u3a

# Notices

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## FRIDAY GENERAL MEETING, 1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH, 2.15, AT ST. BENET HALL

This month's speaker will be Simon White, talking about Peter Beales and the Romance of the Rose.

***Please note that Friday general meetings will return to Sacred Heart church hall from April onwards.***

## SACRED HEART CHURCH HALL AND ALTERNATIVES

We're very pleased to be able tell you that Sacred Heart church hall will be available again from the beginning of March. If you used it before it closed, you should have been contacted by Chris White to check if you want to return. If you haven't heard from her yet or if you want to make a new booking, she can be contacted at [c.white510@btinternet.com](mailto:c.white510@btinternet.com).

If Sacred Heart hall isn't suitable or isn't available when you need a venue, other options include:

- St Nicholas Room and St Benet Hall, next to St Nicholas church. They're suited to a range of activities and both have kitchens. They have a shared entrance, with accessible toilets. They cost around £23 for a morning or afternoon. For further information and bookings, contact the Halls Manager Mrs Ann Herd [annherdb.ed@gmail.com](mailto:annherdb.ed@gmail.com)
- North Walsham Community Centre, next to the library with several rooms of different sizes. More information is available at <https://www.northwalshamcommunitycentre.co.uk/>
- North Walsham Library, which is happy to host small groups and doesn't charge.

## 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.

## Group Alerts

**Mah Jong** will be moving back to the Sacred Heart church hall for April's meeting. The group is keen to attract new members, so if you wish to learn how to play this intriguing game contact Ralph or Mave Edwards

The **Wine Appreciation** group meets to try different wines over lunch once a month. The costs of food and wine are shared and are typically £10 per meeting.

More people would like to join the group but it already fills its venue and it wouldn't be practical to hold meetings elsewhere. We would therefore like to start a second group.

You don't need to be an expert, just someone who enjoys trying different types of wine and who would like to do so with others over a leisurely lunch.

If you would be interested in joining it and/or hosting it in your home, please email [maveedwards@hotmail.com](mailto:maveedwards@hotmail.com).

## NW u3a Groups and Days

Week	Day	Morning	Afternoon
1	Monday	Coffee Morning <i>Richard Nevill</i>	Jazz Appreciation <i>Jim Costello</i>
	Tuesday		
	Wednesday		Mac Users <i>Richard Nevill</i>
	Thursday		Digital Photography <i>Richard Nevill</i> Mind, Body, Spirit <i>Chrissie Kimber</i>
	Friday		Monthly meeting
	Sunday	Sunday Lunch Jazz <i>Waspe</i>	

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		History <i>Brenda Tibbles</i> Life Story <i>Maureen Cavanagh</i>
3	Monday	Coffee Morning <i>Richard Nevill</i>	Committee Meeting
	Tuesday		Gardening <i>Ronnie Cooke</i>
	Wednesday		Art Appreciation <i>Mave Edwards</i> Rock & Pop <i>Marilyn Nevill</i>
	Thursday	Current Affairs <i>Steve Guratsky</i>	Computer Group <i>Richard Nevill</i>
	Friday	The Big Question <i>Steve Guratsky</i>	Brain Games <i>Janet Head</i> Scrabble <i>Jane Harris-Hall</i> Mah Jong <i>Ralph Edwards</i>
4	Monday	Coffee Morning <i>Richard Nevill</i>	Folk Music <i>Jean Simpson</i>
	Tuesday	Cycling <i>Roy Smith</i>	Cycling <i>Roy Smith</i>
	Wednesday		Knit & Stitch* <i>Brenda Tibbles</i>
	Thursday	Cryptic Crosswords <i>John Harris-Hall</i>	
	Friday	Walking <i>Chrissie Kimber</i>	Family History** <i>Marilyn Nevill</i>

\* Last Wednesday of the month

\*\* Last Friday of the month

# News from the Groups

## Art Appreciation

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Diana B's subject was Political and Social Art which she threw open to us in smaller groups to begin the session. Responses given to the whole group after this were interesting, intelligent and sometimes off the wall. As was the rather strange film, touching on Banksy, but mostly focusing on an obscure, bonkers French bloke which followed. Fortified by strong cups of tea more enlightening conversation flowed, on what had been a thoroughly entertaining afternoon. Many thanks to Diana for being our guide. Views on Banksy varied wildly.

Next month we meet at The Sainsbury Centre.

## Myra Burgess

### Book Group

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Our monthly book, courtesy of the library, was "Distant Hours" by Kate Morton. It was given an average score of 8 out of 10 by our members, one of the highest we have given! It is set in the 1940s and 1990s so travels back and forth between two linked story lines. Some members really enjoyed this and are going to look out for more books by this author, others enjoyed it as a one off.

There is a danger that covering two time periods can sometimes be confusing but most members did not find this a problem. I think we all enjoyed the writing style and the plot, which had a few twists and turns to keep us on our toes.

Our next book is "War of the Worlds" by H.G. Wells, our first Science Fiction book as a group, I am looking forward to that, and the one after is "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee, both classics. We like to get our teeth into a variety of genres!

## Yvonne Dickinson

### Coffee Mornings

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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

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I was five minutes late for the meeting by which time two clues of a Times Cryptic had already been completed. It looked like all was to be plain sailing. But we were soon stuck in a quagmire of confusion, making wild guesses and unfounded assertions when logic and analysis were supposed to prevail. Oh how we were missing out illustrious leader, American Toilet, and his side-kick, Pharl (anag.)!

Time ticked by excruciatingly slowly. We seemed to be getting nowhere. Then, suddenly, a breakthrough! Clue after clue revealed itself until we only had three left, whereupon Bra End (anag.) at last produced her smart phone and looked up their answers. Why we hadn't done this before is completely beyond me.

We then tried a Guardian Quiptic which Compiler's Viking Boat? completed in about ten minutes, much to the consternation of the rest of us.

I'm supposed to tell you about my favourite clue, but I can't because they were all horrible!

Greek Goddess of Hunting Meets Shouty Man?

**Diana Barker**

## Current Affairs

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The first topic of conversation school uniforms, prompted by an article on research into that subject in the EDP. This sparked a lot of reminiscences for all the members of our group.

We moved on to discuss the workings of coalitions – one of our number has worked in one at County Hall.

Israel, inevitably, was the next topic with concerns being raised about anti-Israeli sentiment being interpreted as antisemitism.

Our final two topics were the age of the potential US president, and discussion of the topics to be included in the Labour manifesto.

**Ralph Edwards**

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## **Jazz Appreciation**

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The next get together of the North Walsham u3a Jazz Group will be on Monday March 4th at the St Nicholas Room starting at 2pm.

Carolinda will be telling us all about the life & music of the marvellous saxophonist John Coltrane; he was one of the most influential and acclaimed figures in the history of jazz and 20th-century music.

Besides playing some wonderful tracks by Coltrane she also tells me that she has been researching his personal life as well. It should be an enjoyable session for those of us who already admire his talents & for those who have yet to discover his wonderful music.

Looking forward to our meeting in April we have decided on the theme of 'Trains & Boats & 'Planes'. The idea is that we each choose a jazz song based on the chosen subject like....'Take the A Train' or even 'Slow Boat to China', should be interesting to see what everyone comes up with?

The jazz group meet in North Walsham on the 1st Monday of the month at the St Nicholas Room starting at 2pm. We would love to welcome others to our friendly group. You don't need to know anything about jazz, just be a curious music lover.

Contact Jim Costello email [jamescostello@yahoo.com](mailto:jamescostello@yahoo.com)

**Jim Costello**

## **Sunday Lunch Group**

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The brand new group, dedicated to enjoy a great Sunday lunch once a month, happily began its life with a great turnout at the Recruiting Sergeant on February 8th. Almost a full turnout as it transpired ! Everyone was happy that , at last, the pre-Covid Sunday custom was being re-invented. I was not here then, but the leader at the time has to take full credit for creating such wonderful memories!

We now have a large membership list, so unfortunately it is now closed as there are few venues that would be able to accommodate us all. However, I can start a waiting list for people I could contact at the last minute in case of cancellations . Just let me know at

[jazzwaspe@hotmail.com](mailto:jazzwaspe@hotmail.com)

**Jazz Waspe**

## **Ten Pin Bowling**

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We had another enjoyable session, a lot of "Strikes " were achieved much to the delight of the skilful bowlers. There was a lot of chat and laughter which is what the best part of our group.

Our next meeting is Thursday 14th March at 10.00am at "Strikers ".

If you wish to join us please email [diane\\_mulligan@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:diane_mulligan@yahoo.co.uk)

The price is £9.95 for 2 hours which includes coffee or tea half time.

All are welcome to join, no experience is necessary we are friendly.

**Diane Mulligan**

## **U3Sings**

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The group met on the 8th February in St. Benets Hall. David led us through warm up exercises and then introduced us to a piece of music called Dona nobis pacem 'grant us peace'.

Following this we sang the more lively Bring Me Sunshine which reminded us of Morecambe and Wise! After the tea break we sang songs in unison which included Bridge Over Troubled Waters and Castle on a Cloud from Les Miserables.

Come and join us. Singing has both mental and physical benefits. We don't aim to sing in public it's just for fun.

**Patsy Tomlinson**

## **Wine Appreciation**

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This month June provided Wines from the Rhone Valley – the first two Reds were individual grapes, whilst the third was a blend of the two

The Wines and Scores were:

8.1 Lirac Blanc La Fermade Domaine Maby 2023 14.5% £13.95

6.0 Gabriel Meffre Côtes-Du-Rhône Saint-Vincent Blanc 2022 13% £10.99

7.0 The Society's French Syrah 2022 – Syrah 13% £7.95

7.7 Domaine Camp Galhan, Les Frigouliers, IGP Cévennes 2022 – Grenache 13% £10.50

7.7 The Society's Côtes-du-Rhône 2022 – Grenache / Syrah Blend 13% £8.75

All the Wines are from the Wine Society, apart from the second which is from Waitrose

Cheers !

**Roy Tuff**



# March Walks 2024

## Walking Group Coordinator

Chrissie Kimber at [rebnikc@btinternet.com](mailto:rebnikc@btinternet.com)

## March 2024 walks

### Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March approx. 5.5 miles

Leader Steve Guratsky

Start point St Andrew church, Cromer Rd, Metton, Norwich NR11 8QU. The village is small and doesn't seem to have a car park as such, so I'd advise people to share cars if they can, park wherever they can find space and then meet at the church just before 10.00

It's a 5.5 mile circular via Felbrigg, with a bit that can be cut off if we want something a bit shorter.

There's an optional lunch at the Foundry Arms in Northrepps afterwards. They're dog friendly and the food has always been tasty and good value for money when I've been there before. I've said I'll phone them with a definite number at 10.00 on the morning. They've asked for pre-orders at that time, so could you please ask anyone who wants lunch to have a look at the menu online beforehand and come ready to tell me what they'd like when they arrive. I've attached a couple of menus of food available at lunchtime. More details at <https://www.foundry-arms-northrepps.com/>

**If you are reading this information from the newsletter please email [rebnikc@btinternet.com](mailto:rebnikc@btinternet.com) to get a copy of the menu**

### Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March 10:00 am start approx. 5.5 miles

Leader Chrissie Kimber

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**

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

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We start this month with the (true but improbable) story of Albert Einstein hiding from the Nazis in a hut at Roughton in 1933....

Einstein on the run: how the world's greatest scientist hid from Nazis in a Norfolk hut  
<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2024/feb/10/einstein-on-the-run-how-the-worlds-greatest-scientist-hid-from-nazis-in-a-norfolk-hut>

This month's other stories may not be quite as interesting (or much like a John Buchan novel) but they are (as always) improbable but true and likely to make you smile...

A new start after 60: I learned to tango – now I'm out in clubs till 3am  
<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2024/jan/29/a-new-start-after-60-i-learned-to-tango-now-im-out-in-clubs-till-3am>

'We just held hands and jumped!' How one of Britain's happiest, healthiest communes was built  
<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2024/jan/30/we-just-held-hands-and-jumped-how-one-of-britains-happiest-healthiest-communes-was-built>

Young, old and marvellous: how a care home built a nursery – and everyone thrived  
<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2024/feb/06/young-old-and-marvellous-how-a-care-home-built-a-nursery-and-everyone-thrived>

Liverpool man who inherited £100,000 lets 12 strangers give the money away  
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/feb/07/liverpool-man-who-inherited-100000-lets-12-strangers-give-the-money-away>

English Breakfast Society recommends swapping tomato for pineapple  
<https://www.theguardian.com/food/2024/jan/26/english-breakfast-society-recommends-swapping-tomato-for-pineapple>

No salt please, we're British: how to make the perfect cup of tea  
<https://www.theguardian.com/food/2024/jan/26/no-salt-please-british-how-make-perfect-cup-tea>

Deja brew: chemistry professor's latest advice on tea drinking – try grapefruit  
<https://www.theguardian.com/food/2024/feb/16/deja-brew-chemistry-professors-latest-advice-on-tea-drinking-try-grapefruit>

Juvenile great apes love to tease and annoy their elders, study finds  
<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2024/feb/14/juvenile-great-apes-love-to-tease-and-annoy-their-elders-study-finds>

Jack Russell terrier who loves to surf makes a splash on beaches of Peru  
<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2024/jan/27/jack-russell-terrier-loves-surfing-peru>

Meet Fluffy the alligator snapping turtle found in Urswick Tarn, Cumbria  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-68261267>

Farnham penguin finds 'guide bird' in one of her friends  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-surrey-68267633>

Ae forest pine marten poo count shows number growth  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-south-scotland-68165934>

'They deserve love!' Last-chance pets – and the people who rescue them  
<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2024/feb/07/they-deserve-love-last-chance-pets-and-the-people-who-rescue-them>

It takes two ... or does it? Charlotte the single stingray pregnant with pups  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/14/charlotte-stingray-pregnant-pups-north-carolina>

Cat lost for four years turns up over 150 miles from Northern Ireland home  
<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2024/feb/15/cat-lost-four-years-miles-northern-ireland-home-blueberry>

And finally, two more articles containing selections of beautiful photographs:

Who's the smallest of them all? Meet the world's amazing tiniest creatures  
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/feb/08/whos-the-smallest-of-them-all-meet-the-worlds-amazing-tiniest-creatures-aoe>

International Garden Photographer of the Year competition 2024

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-68127991>

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>