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# North Walsham u3a Newsletter April 2023

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'Spring has sprung, the grass is riz; I wonder where the birdies is?'

These words, possibly by Ogden Nash, reflect the worries outlined in Rachel Carson's classic 'The Silent Spring'.

There are many theories as to the reason for this, but we live in one of the hotspots for wildlife diversity – long may this continue!

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.

March has seen a great deal of change in the North Norfolk u3a. Make sure that you read about all the changes on the Group Alerts page.

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 April 27th**.

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

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# Thoughts From the Chair

By the time you read this, the good news will be that it's officially spring, while the bad news will be that you've lost an hour of sleep as the clocks go forward. If your glass of water is usually half full, this is an example of the universe being a perfectly balanced thing of wonder; if your glass is usually half empty, it's proof that someone will always find a way to ruin absolutely everything.

If you are a 'glass half empty' person and worry a little too much about things not being as you'd like them to be, that's fine but do also remember that not all problems are serious. It really doesn't matter if you lose an hour of sleep (go to bed earlier) or if your coffee tastes like old socks (make some more) or if it rains when you want to cut the grass (do it tomorrow or just let it grow into a wild flower meadow). As a wise man once said, 'Don't sweat the small stuff'. Or, as St. Augustine prayed, 'God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.' And since you ask, yes, I am still a godless heathen, but I also recognise good advice when I read it, no matter where it comes from.

So, to recap, perfection is impossible but it often doesn't matter that it is. And, in that spirit, I want to direct you to this cheery article on the Guardian website:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/mar/04/the-joy-of-mediocrity-we-need-hobbies-even-if-were-bad-at-them-to-free-us-from-perfection>

The gist is that having hobbies that we're not very good at helps us worry less about not being perfect in other ways. So, to pick a random example that's not about me at all (ahem), being regularly thrashed at Scrabble could help someone (not me, obviously) have more realistic expectations and feel less frustrated in other areas of life (hypothetically).

Of course, the great thing about this is that we're all already doing lots of things we may not be very good at in our u3a interest groups. The whole point is that we go to them for pleasure and company, not to be highly competitive or expert. (Having said that, I have heard a rumour that croquet can be a pretty vicious game sometimes, but I'm sure that's not true for our croquet group.)

If you're still with me, I have one more suggestion for something to do with all the extra daylight hours. Why not set yourself a challenging target? It doesn't matter what it is as long as it's something you want to do. For inspiration, you could start with this article from the BBC News website about Sarah Merker from west London. She recently completed a decade-long project to sample a scone at every one of the 244 National Trust sites across England, Wales and Northern Ireland where you can buy them, and ranked every one on her blog: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-64822669>

This may sound a little eccentric but it's also the most brilliantly English thing imaginable – stately homes, scones and relentless determination to finish a completely pointless task.

If you'd like to emulate Sarah but are short on ideas for projects, let me offer a few options that might be of particular interest to the interest groups I'm a member of:

- The Big Question group (a new group – see below): Find at least 100 unanswerable questions. (For questions to count, there must be incontrovertible proof that nobody knows the answers.)
- Current Affairs: There are 650 MPs in the House of Commons. Find one thing that each of them has said that is probably or definitely untrue. (No, you can't have 650 things for one MP!)

- Walking: Walk to and have lunch in every pub in Norfolk. (Lunch has to be an actual meal, not just crisps, and you have to prove you've been there by posting a review on Tripadvisor.)
- Wine Appreciation: Find and sample 26 types of wine from each wine producing country, with names starting with each of the 26 letters of the alphabet. (Of course this is impossible, but it will be fun trying to get as close to the target as possible!) If you share your ideas for more challenges at <https://www.northwalshamu3a.org/contact-us>, I'll include the best ones in next month's newsletter.

Best wishes,

Steve Guratsky,

Chairman, North Walsham u3a

## Notices

### **April General Meeting Changed To 31st March**

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Our April general meeting will be at 2.15 on Friday 31ST MARCH at the Sacred Heart church hall as usual.

The guest speaker will be Melvyn Linford, who will be talking East Anglian Miscellany.

### **Possible New Venue for Interest Groups**

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If you're looking for somewhere to hold group meetings, you may want to consider the Pilgrim Shelter on the old Loop Road, opposite the church, in Trimmingham.

It can accommodate up to 28 people with parking for eight cars.

The hire cost is £5 per hour.

For more details or to make a booking, contact Dot Bradley after 6.00 on 01263-833249 or Linda on 01263-834349.

## Virtual u3a

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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

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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](mailto:ricnev@gmail.com) and ask to be included in invitation emails.

## Music Technology Group

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Music Technology Group – More Information

I've had a few people who've asked for more information about what we might do in a Music Technology group. Here are my thoughts, but it would be up to the group to decide what particular aspects of music technology they want to discuss and learn about.

[1]  
[SEP] This group could introduce members to the basics of musical sound production from both acoustic and electronic instruments. Through a combination of discussions and hands-on activities, members could gain an understanding of the fundamental principles of sound, different types of instruments, and the techniques used to produce and manipulate sound.

We might go on to discuss the basics of music technology and perhaps learn how to use and operate various software and hardware tools used in music creation and production. Additional topics might include DAWS (digital audio workstations), MIDI controllers, music sampling, and sound design.

I've identified a lot of online resources that help to explore the basics for anyone new to this interesting field of music, so let me know if you might like to come to an initial meeting.

Richard Nevill, [ricnev@gmail.com](mailto:ricnev@gmail.com)

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## Group Alerts

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### New Groups

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.last183@gmail.com](mailto:judith.last183@gmail.com)

**Croquet** is re-starting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of April at the Scarborough Hill Hotel 2.00 – 4.00 p.m. There are two vacancies for the Tuesday group. Contact Rod Mayes via the website or email [roderickm46@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:roderickm46@yahoo.co.uk)

### The Big Question

This is a discussion group that looks at one 'big question' in each session. Discussions can be about whatever group members choose and may bring in information and ideas from many subjects including history, politics, sociology, philosophy, sciences, creative arts and so on. Members of the group each lead a session from time to time, starting it by introducing their chosen 'big question' and then leading a discussion about it. For example, the first two sessions asked 'What are schools for?' and 'We are what we eat?'

We're a friendly bunch and you don't need to be an expert to take part. You just need to be willing to contribute to discussions and lead one about once a year.

The group meets on the third Friday morning in the month in the home of two its members North Walsham. Contact Steve Guratsky via the website or at [steve.guratsky@gmail.com](mailto:steve.guratsky@gmail.com)

### Yoga

A message from Joy Lloyd

It is with regret that I have to announce that the Yoga Group has ended. The last session took place on 28th March. Unfortunately, ill-health, rising costs and falling numbers have caused this to be necessary.

I should like to thank all those who supported me during the last few years in keeping the group going. You know who you are. Very many thanks.

### Painting and Drawing

Will be suspended between now and next Summer. See the panel on the next page

### Cycling

if you have a bicycle rusting away in your shed and fancy getting on the road again come and join our friendly group we cycle about 15 miles along country roads (where possible) at a leisurely pace .We generally call in for lunch on our way round our route, start points vary

The next bike ride is 11th April and the next one is 30th May. Contact Roy Smith via the website or [roysidsmith@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:roysidsmith@yahoo.co.uk)

## Drawing and Painting - Taster Morning

Do you have an interest in drawing and painting, but have been reluctant to expose your 'lack of skill' to others or to invest in the equipment needed? Why not come and have a go on Monday 17th April from 10 - 12.30 in an informal setting where we can all help each other. A small still-life will be set up for us all to sketch, various materials will be available, and we can discuss techniques as we go. We could also discuss whether we want to go ahead with a reconstituted U3A drawing and painting group, and if so how often and when it would suit people best to meet. We could also share our thoughts about going out to places to draw and paint during the summer months. Please contact Maggie Guite via the website if you are interested in the Taster, as space is limited.

# Interest Group Summary 28/03/2023

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 March 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

## Art Appreciation

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This month a small group of us went to the Sainsbury Centre to see their latest exhibition entitled Empowering Art: Indigenous Creativity and Activism from North America's North West Coast.

The First Nation's land spreads 1,000 miles up the north west coast from Washington State to Alaska and is home to many First Nations who have their own culture and traditions. one of which is the potlatch system of giving gifts made by them. When British and European explorers arrived on their shores they acquired examples of their work to take back home but unfortunately they gave the First Nations diseases which wiped out half of the population! Subsequently they were forced into a North American and European way of life e.g. having their hair cut, going to school, and abandoning their traditions. This law was repealed in 1956.

There is a wide range of new and old exhibits ranging from a huge totem pole carved out of cedar to tiny objects carved from walrus ivory. Masks played a large part in their lives and there are many examples of these, as well as jewellery made from gold and silver.

We had an excellent guide and we all agreed it was an amazing Exhibition.

## Maureen Ford

## Computer Group

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We're thinking of changing the name of this group to Tech Talking. When we started the group in 2011, we were looking to help people who had little knowledge or experience of computers and the internet. Since then, many more of us have come to understand what computers can be used for in day to day life and we can now go online to resolve queries as they arise.

Times have moved on. Nowadays, we have an array of many different technologies that we need help with - 'phones, tablets, smart home devices, smart TVs, and many other digital and internet connected devices. Another area I'm having trouble with is keeping abreast with all the changes in social media platforms and technologies.

We also need to keep up with evolving and innovative technologies - for example we need to understand the potential and risks of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine learning so that we remain in control and don't let the technologists (or the machines!) take over.

Our group (whatever it's called!) currently meets and chats via Zoom on the third Thursday of each month - Contact Richard Nevill, ricnev@gmail.com or via the contact button on our website for more information.

## Richard Nevill

## Cryptic Crosswords

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The cryptic crossword group met and, as usual, warmed up with a Guardian "Quiptic" crossword before moving onto a "Times" cryptic. Both crosswords were more difficult than normal (the "Times" crosswords are given a "degree of difficulty" ranking and we are progressing with these at each meeting).

We recruited a visitor to the library who was interested in crosswords and, having joined our group, will now join the U3A – Ralph is a first class recruiter!

We had finished just over half of the "Times" crossword at five minutes to twelve BUT once a "key" clue was solved, the other clues flowed in easily on time – as is often the way with crosswords.

Sandra got the "yellow jersey" this month, solving:  
"Fancy an idea containing this, for example (6)"\*

Ralph got the runner up "yellow jersey" solving this:  
"Aids in RE course? Wrong – they are used in maths classes (10,4)"\*

A few other clues might whet some appetites to join us:  
"Smart fellow in Zurich, maybe sounding drunk (5)"\*  
"Two characters said to be very good (5)"\*

EXCEL

SWISH

RODS

AIRE

CUISEN

POISON

If you would like to join us – numbers are limited – please contact me via U3A Beacon (on the NW U3A website).

\* answers:

## Current Affairs

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This month was another hybrid session, with three members joining us via Zoom, the remainder gathering at Dave's house. The topics that we discussed were as follows:-

**Budget** – nobody was impressed by the budget – particular opprobrium was reserved for the tax changes to the pension pot and there was nothing to support public services. Free childcare places were thought to be a positive move, but where would the workforce come from?

**Child Care** – the increase in the number that individual adults could look after was questioned on the grounds of safety and quality. It was also suggested that this measure was 'sneaked in' with the budget, as it would prove immensely controversial.

**BBC Priorities** – inevitably, questions were asked about the priorities at the BBC – paying Gary Lineker £1.3 million whilst axing the BBC singers.

**Sheep** – there is a suggestion that all sheep be banned in Britain for the sake of the environment. This led to a general discussion as to the merits or otherwise of these livestock and the general movement for re-wilding.

**Wine** – our last topic was comparatively light – should wine grapes be harvested by machine?

Ralph Edwards

## Digital Photography

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March's Meeting – Trunch Village Hall

This was the last meeting of the Winter program. Richard opened the meeting and welcomed prospective new members, to the Group.



Richard Setting Up

Bob, the Group Leader, then spoke on the Summer Program. Since John F stepped back from the role of leading the Summer Program, the group has been in some disarray however there's a plan.

Bob outlined possible solutions and a discussion ensued. He then gave a list of possible venues for the program and said that he will lead the April visit, Thursday 6th April, to North Walsham church. Thursday being Market Day in North Walsham, in the newly refurbished Market Place.

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Sandra volunteered to lead the May visit, possibly to the Railway Station in Sheringham. Possibly with Len's assistance.

Richard then recapped last month's Theme, Portraits, and went on to speak on this month's subject, Photo Management. He took the group through the reasons people may have for managing data, especially with the advent of prevalent electronic devices, smart phones and devices as well as digital cameras. Lots of photos, usually saved ad hoc and almost unsearchable.

Possible solutions to this being CD/DVD's, Hard Disk Drives/Solid State Drives (HDD's\SSD's), Universal Serial Bus (USB) devices and Secure Digital (SD) Cards, as well as Cloud Storage. Each of these having its own pros and cons.

He then spoke on two other subjects that had come up in the group topic survey.

Burst Photography. Pretty much as it says on the tin. Where a camera, or device, takes a series of photographs in a continuous burst. Depending on the sophistication of the device the length and number of shots can be chosen by the operator. With differing results.

Bracketing. A technique of taking several shots of the same subject using different camera settings.

There then was a break for refreshments, during which members took the opportunity to discuss the subjects.



Discussions took place



Richard giving advice to Sandra



The group being attentive



Ardent discussion, probably about gardening

Members submissions on last month's theme, Portraits, were then shown. None of which are included to save my embarrassment.

Next month, April, will be the first of the Summer Program; taking place in St Nicholas Church North Walsham. Meeting at 2pm outside Kitale Café on Thursday 6th April.

So, if you feel you'd like to join us, all are very welcome

**Bob Shortis**

## **Gardening**

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This month the Garden Group visited Blickling Hall to see the spring flowers coming out. Loads of daffodils, hellebores and still plenty of snowdrops. Also a squirrel or two!

We were joined by several members of the photography group who took some superb pictures.

The weather stayed fine for us which was a bonus – it threatened to rain, which would have probably curtailed our walk.

It was a really pleasant afternoon, and I think we all learned something from one source or another. Amazing what tips can be picked up by listening to other's conversations!!



**Ronnie Cooke**



## **History**

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Our last project was public health and medical science from pre-history.

Some "cures" were horrific. Poor Charles II had to endure extreme pain and torment before he eventually died.

From the 17th century onwards medical science was making discoveries, but it was not until the 19th century that things started to come together and Louis Pasteur's discoveries were the final piece of the jigsaw to give us modern medicine.

We are now looking into Trade Routes and the passage of people on well-trodden ways throughout the centuries.

Next meeting half of us are finding out about British canals and the others, exploring the Spice Routes.

**Brenda Tibbles**

## **Jazz Appreciation**

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At the last meeting of the Jazz Group David brought along some recordings he had of BBC Jazz presenters from the past. It was an entertaining & informative session hearing those familiar voices again. I especially enjoyed the tribute to the 'King of Swing' Benny Goodman. Great stuff, thank you David.

At our next session, Val has volunteered to tell us about jazz organist Shirley Scott. It should be fascinating & interesting to hear how successful she was in what was predominantly a 'man's world'.

We meet again on Monday April 3rd at 2pm in the Meeting Room at the Sacred Heart Church.

## **Jim Costello**

### **Mac Users**

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Up until now we've tended to concentrate on things directly related to Mac computers in isolation. It is now obvious that these are really just part of an Apple family of interrelated products - iDevices, iCloud, Home Kit smart devices, Apple Watches, Apple TV+ etc, so perhaps we need to treat our exploration of this family of Apple gear in a more holistic way. So if you've got any need for help with any of these Apple devices or technologies, why not join one of our Zoom meetings at 2pm on the first Wednesday of each month, or contact Richard Nevill for more information: [ricnev@gmail.co.uk](mailto:ricnev@gmail.co.uk) We're happy to welcome new members, including those who are thinking about switching to Macs.

## **Richard Nevill**

### **Ten Pin Bowling**

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We had a most enjoyable morning, 15 members took part in a friendly competitive spirit, whether it was skill or luck a number of strikes were achieved. Cheering and applause erupted giving encouragement.

As the Easter school holidays clash with our next date, the April date will be Thursday 20th at 10.00am

New bowlers are always welcome the cost is £9.95 for 2hours including tea or coffee halftime.

If you are interested email me [diane\\_mulligan@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:diane_mulligan@yahoo.co.uk)

## **Diane Mulligan**

## Wine Appreciation

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This month we changed our format slightly. Rather than just tasting we tried to look at the relationship between quality and price.

Taking a Rose, White and Red wine we selected 2 wines from each type with the same grape. All the wines were purchased from Sainsbury and we purchase a low price example and a higher price example to see if the higher price gave a better quality wine.

The wines selected and the price were as follows

### Rose

Sainsbury House Dry Rose product of Spain 11%ABV	£4.50
Mirabeau en Provence Rose product of France 12.5% ABV	£11.00

### White

Clearspring Sauvignon Blanc product of South Africa 12.5% ABV	£5.50
Reverend Sloan Saint Clair Sauvignon Blanc Product NZ 13%ABV	£14.00

### Red

Penguin Sands Merlot product of South Africa 12.5%ABV	£4.00
Journeys End Blue Gum Merlot Product of South Africa 14%ABV	£11.00

The results were quite interesting with the more expensive Rose and Red being chosen as the preferred but not buy a great margin. In the case of the White Wine the Cheaper one was preferred.

We will go back to our normal tastings next month.

**Tony Cooke**

## ***April Walks 2023***

### **Walking Group Coordinator**

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

### **Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April 10:00 am start approx. 6 miles.**

Walk Leader Roy Smith mobile 079339781007

Venue Fairhaven gardens car park, School Road South Walsham NR13 6DZ

There is some walking along quiet country lanes.

Lunch for those who would like to stop will be at Fairhaven café

This walk was originally planned for March but got cancelled due to ill health

**Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April 10:00 am start approx. 4 miles**

Walk leaders Jayne and Neil Potter Mobile 07923691146

Start point: Plenty of parking outside our house 10 Hawthorn Rise, Mundesley, NR11 8JY

## **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 the usual crop of animal and natural world related stories...

Cocaine Bear and wayward wallabies: the improbable history of animals getting high  
<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2023/feb/22/cocaine-bear-and-wayward-wallabies-the-improbable-history-of-animals-getting-high>

Oddities of the not so deep – in pictures  
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/gallery/2023/feb/23/oddities-of-the-not-so-deep-in-pictures>

Thor the walrus spotted in Iceland after leaving UK <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-64765003>

Somerset: Stunning starling murmuration caught on camera <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-somerset-64757979>

'Awe-inspiring': UK readers share their northern lights snaps <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/feb/28/awe-inspiring-uk-readers-share-their-northern-lights-snaps>

And moving on to an assortment of examples of human creativity (and yes, cooking is creative!)

Sculptures created from secondhand books – in pictures  
<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2023/mar/04/sculptures-created-from-secondhand-books-in-pictures>

Latest Banksy mural on derelict farmhouse in Kent is demolished  
<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2023/mar/15/new-banksy-mural-on-derelict-farmhouse-in-kent-is-demolished>

British Pie Awards: 'Why I'm aiming high with my doner kebab pie' – BBC News  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-64864452> 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>