
North Walsham u3a Newsletter September 2024



This photo from the Digital Photography Group was taken by Gill Palmer on their recent outing to Mannington Hall. It is a reminder of a Summer that is almost gone; as a write, the Horse Chestnut tree opposite our house is just turning and beginning to drop its conkers

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 September 26th**.

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

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Thoughts From the Chair

Important advice to readers: This piece may seem a bit dry and heavy at first, but don't worry. It returns to normal levels of silliness by the end, so please keep reading!

A few years ago while on holiday and looking for something to read, I found a book in a charity shop called 'The Philosopher at the End of the Universe'. (If you're thinking that that was a strange name for a charity shop, you may need to be a bit less literal and use a bit more common sense. Also, extra points if you get the reference to another book with a similar title – without using Google!) The book was cheap and combined two of my favourite things, philosophy and science fiction (or three if you count saving money on books). The author, Mark Rowlands, had used science fiction books and films to explain some really knotty philosophical ideas in an impressively clear and thoughtful way and I recommend the book most strongly if you like that sort of thing.

I was reminded of it recently when reading a review of his latest book, 'The Happiness of Dogs'. (The title of the review began with 'I Wag, Therefore I Am...', for which the reviewer owes an apology to Descartes and to pretty much anyone else who cares about philosophy, or indeed quality journalism.) Like the previous book, this one is partly aimed at people who aren't normally interested in the philosophy; but it's also a serious discussion of some of the oldest and most written about questions in the subject, such as, 'What makes human existence worth the bother?' and 'How can we free ourselves of inner conflict and live with joy?'. There isn't space here to do justice to his ideas here, but suffice it to say that he thinks we have a lot to learn from dogs. If you want to know more, the review is at <https://www.theguardian.com/books/article/2024/aug/18/i-wag-therefore-i-am-the-philosophy-of-dogs>, or you can just read the book.

Continuing with this entirely unprovoked outbreak of philosophical musing, another recent article that got me thinking was called, 'Find a stray cat? That might be the cat distribution system at work'. It started with a nice story about someone who adopted a very cute stray kitten (that he called Dandruff because it likes sitting on his shoulder!) and posted about it on social media. Many people responded to say that his unexpected acquisition was not the result of random chance, but the work of a chaotic, unseen and possibly mystical force known as the cat distribution system (CDS). One poster said, "The universe will give you a cat sometimes. When a cat appears in your life, it means you've been entrusted with it by the universe. It deemed you a good person and said here's a kitten for you."

So, my (entirely unsolicited) suggestion for Mark Rowlands's next book is that, having 'done' dogs, he should move on to cats. He might consider the idea of a sentient universe that uses its free will to 'decide' who to give cats to. (Philosophers spend a lot of time trying to work out what sentience actually is and arguing about whether there is such a thing as free will.) He might wonder why the universe would reward good people with cats rather than for example dogs that are (apparently) always happy and will fetch any sticks that you accidentally throw away. He might explore the question of what makes someone 'good' and therefore deserving of a cat (or not). Alternatively, he might point out that cats are actually small furry psychopaths that will destroy your furniture and make your house smell, and infer from that that cats are in fact only distributed as punishments for evil, not rewards for goodness.

If he does write such a book, I will of course expect a free cat (or preferably a more desirable reward) for my contribution to his writing career. Of course, I'm not holding my breath. He's much more likely to point out that the whole idea of a cat distribution system is pretty silly and not worth writing about. But, if he's right about that, it would mean that the internet isn't totally reliable and that we need more trustworthy sources of information like... books?

Best wishes,

Steve Guratsky,

Chairman, North Walsham u3a

GENERAL MEETING, FRIDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER, 2.15, AT SACRED HEART HALL

This month's meeting will include a talk by Peter Lawrence on Humphrey Repton, 18th Century Landscape Designer. We look forward to seeing you there.

SACRED HEART PARISH HALL AND ALTERNATIVES

Geraldine and Arthur Williams have now taken over responsibility for bookings and invoicing at Sacred Heart Parish Hall and can be contacted on 07931 891278 or at artfwilliams@outlook.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 at 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.

THIRD AGE MATTERS

Articles from recent editions of Third Age Matters are listed under Screenreader Editions at: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/news/publications>

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.

NORTH WALSHAM MUSEUM AND INFORMATION CENTRE – CAN YOU HELP?

Mi North Walsham is a combined museum and information centre located in Vicarage Street. It provides information about our town for residents and tourists and offers information and exhibits about the town's 1600 year history.

The centre is run by volunteers and the centre is seeking to recruit more to join its existing team. The work is enjoyable and hours are flexible. Most volunteers do two hour morning or afternoon shifts between 10am and 2pm on weekdays and some Saturdays.

Volunteers are the public face of Mi North Walsham and of the town too, and as such are helpful, friendly and informative in their conversations with the public. This is a great opportunity for North Walsham based people, who have a good knowledge of the town and local area. An interest in its history is helpful too, although not essential.

If you think you can help, please contact Bob Wright at North Walsham Heritage Group a bobwright1958@btinternet.com.

NW u3a Groups and Days

Week	Day	Morning	Afternoon
1	Mon	Coffee Morning <i>Richard Nevill</i>	JazzAppreciation <i>Jim Costello</i> Croquet <i>John Grier</i>
	Tue		
	Wed		Mac Users <i>Richard Nevill</i>
	Thur		Digital Photography <i>Richard Nevill</i> Mind, Body, Spirit <i>Chrissie Kimber</i>
	Fri		Monthly meeting
	Sun	Sundy Lunch <i>Jazz Waspe</i>	
Week	Day	Morning	Afternoon
2	Mon	Coffee Morning <i>Richard Nevill</i>	Classical Music <i>Jean Simpson</i>
	Tue		
	Wed		
	Thur	Ten Pin Bowling <i>Diane Mulligan</i>	Book Group <i>Yvonne Dickinson</i> U3Sings <i>Patsy Tomlinson</i> Wine Appreciation <i>Roy Tuff</i>
	Fri		History <i>Brenda Tibbles</i> Life Story <i>Maureen Cavanagh</i>
Week	Day	Morning	Afternoon
3	Mon	Coffee Morning <i>Richard Nevill</i>	Committee Meeting
	Tue		Gardening <i>Ronnie Cooke</i>
	Wed		Art Appreciation <i>Mave Edwards</i> Rock & Pop <i>Marilyn Nevill</i>
	Thur	Current Affairs <i>Steve Guratsky</i>	Computer Group <i>Richard Nevill</i>
	Fri	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>
Week	Day	Morning	Afternoon
4	Mon	Coffee Morning <i>Richard Nevill</i>	Folk Music <i>Jean Simpson</i>
	Tue	Cycling <i>Roy Smith</i>	
	Wed		Knit & Stitch* <i>Brenda Tibbles</i>
	Thur	Cryptic Crosswords <i>John Harris-Hall</i>	
	Fri	Walking <i>Chrissie Kimber</i> Family History** <i>Marilyn Nevill</i>	

* Last Wednesday of the month

ad hoc: Theatre Group

** Last Friday of the month

News from the Groups

Art Appreciation



Most of us had been to the Sainsbury Centre's permanent collection many times. So it was a treat to be shown round just a small number of works by one of the volunteer guides, and to look much more carefully. Our guide talked about just five pieces, out of



which three stood out for me: two beautiful bronze busts of Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, by Jacob Epstein, a large commanding, but rather sorrowful head, from a series called Tributes, by Elizabeth Frink, and lastly a portrait of Pope Pius 12th by Francis Bacon, an artist hugely supported by the Sainsbury's. It is a disturbing piece, as is so much of his oeuvre, influenced by Velasquez, but a great deal more shocking. It stays in the mind.

We all agreed that having the expertise of a guide makes such a difference to the experience. Next month we each discuss and present a single work from the collection which stood out.

Myra Burgess

Book Group



"This month's book was, "Juliet Naked" by Nick Hornby. It is a light-hearted look at a man's obsession with his American rock hero, which started many years ago. His long-suffering girlfriend puts up with this obsession but their life together has begun to stagnate and she is beginning to examine where this is all going. The rock star himself has done nothing but hide himself away since his fame has waned, except collect wives and children, but a visit to England puts him in touch with the couple.

This is a wry look at the lives of these three people, sometimes funny and sometimes sad. There is a lot to identify with as it exams relationships but was not to the liking of all of our group. It received mixed reviews and ended up with a mediocre overall score of five out of ten, scores ranging from 1 to 9. A bit if a "marmite" of a book, you either like it or you don't!"

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

Current Affairs



This month we talked about a variety of topics including the recent civil unrest/riots; who should be allowed to compete in certain Olympic sports, with particular reference to trans-sexual athletes; the withdrawal of the winter fuel allowance to all pensioners not on pension credit and the origin of religious rules of dress, with particular reference to Islamic codes.

Ralph Edwards

Cryptic Crosswords



We started this month with a Guardian Quiptic crossword, which was almost completed in record time, although we were foxed by the shortest clue – Recall star – noted English runner (4)*

This relatively easy start was followed by a Times Cryptic, which was rated as 85 (out of 150), and thus considered quite difficult. By common consent, the best clue was Worker blocking sign in temporary shelter (4,2), the answer to which is Lean To. Ant inside Leo.

*AVON – which is NOVA backwards

Ralph Edwards

Ten Pin Bowling



Pleased to say we are back to our monthly sessions after the summer break.

The date is Thursday September 12th at 10.00am at "Strikers".

The cost is £9.95 for 2 hours including coffee or tea halfway.

Anybody is welcome to join us, we are friendly and our skills vary so it is all done in good humour and fun.

If you wish to do so please contact me diane_mulligan@yahoo.co.uk

Or you can use the list at the monthly meeting.

Look forward to seeing you all.

Diane Mulligan

U3Sings



We had a great session this month. Songs included Banaha, My Dog He Can Do The Can Can, Paddy on The Railway, The Windmills of Your Mind and When I'm Sixty Four.

The Sacred Heart Parish Hall is booked out to North Norfolk District Council on the 12th September so we have moved to St. Benet's Hall for our next get together.

Patsy Tomlinson and Margaret Jeppesen

Wine Appreciation

This month Richard and Marilyn provided excellent BBQ Weather and an interesting selection of Wines from Majestic's Guv'nor Range



The Wines and Scores were:

7.1 Sparkling £7.49

6.7 Blanco £7.99

6.8 Rose £7.99

9.2 The Guv'nor £7.49

8.5 VIP £9.99

9.5 IceWine (from June)

Next month (September 12th) Roy and Eva are hosting

Cheers !

Roy Tuff

September Walks 2024

Walking Group Coordinator

Chrissie Kimber at rebnikc@btinternet.com

Tuesday 10th September 9:30 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

Friday September 27th 10am approx. 4.7 miles

Leader Joe Pitchford

Meet outside the Cricketers on Aldborough Green NR11 7AA.

Plenty of parking around the Green and at the Community Centre car park.

Lunch at Alby Crafts and Gardens NR11 7QE. (The Cricketers might also be an option but they seem a bit hit and miss as to which days they cater.)

Mixed walk including famous Pooh Sticks bridge and quiet country lanes.

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

This month, we're starting with some jokes, courtesy of the Edinburgh Fringe. And please, don't shoot the messenger. I'm only passing them on; I didn't write any of them...

Mark Simmons' ship joke named funniest of Edinburgh fringe

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/article/2024/aug/19/mark-simmons-ship-joke-named-funniest-of-edinburgh-fringe>

Funniest Edinburgh Fringe jokes from years gone by

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cyOnk9241z8o>

Moving on to (sometimes) more serious matters, it's been a good month for tales of dedication, endurance, ingenuity, happy endings and just plain silliness...

Norfolk Wildlife Trust revives endangered species: the local pub

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/article/2024/aug/05/norfolk-wildlife-trust-revives-endangered-species-the-local-pub>

York: Man's viral sanding videos helped turn life around

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cp3dd5p2de0o>

A woman brought her own snacks to Despicable Me 4. Then the police arrived

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/article/2024/aug/01/a-woman-brought-her-own-snacks-to-despicable-me-4-then-the-police-arrived>

Cornwall vet swims to rescue of trapped calves in race against rising tide

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/aug/07/cornwall-vet-swims-to-rescue-of-trapped-calves-in-race-against-rising-tide>

Missing in the wild and praying for survival <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/extra/qxsmv10bx7/missing-in-the-wild-and-praying-for-survival>

Team GB runner Rose Harvey finished marathon despite breaking leg

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c990yd94j7eo>

Kemptown: Unusual double yellow lines appear in Brighton

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx2n3wwplp2o>

Woman, 75, uses gardening tools to fill in potholes outside home in Scottish village
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/aug/22/woman-75-uses-gardening-tools-to-fill-in-potholes-outside-home-in-scottish-village>

Woman, 102, becomes Britain's oldest skydiver <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cyOn431gddlo>

This bird came back from extinction – now scientists in a glider are teaching it to migrate
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/article/2024/aug/28/northern-bald-ibis-bird-back-from-extinction-now-scientists-in-a-glider-are-teaching-it-to-migrate-aoe>

Backpack-wearing dogs enlisted to rewild urban nature reserve in Lewes
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/article/2024/jul/26/backpack-wearing-dogs-enlisted-rewild-urban-nature-reserve-lewes>

Petersfield man's late graduation after parrot sparks rent row
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cz9dmqgrp6o>

Snail farm in Liverpool office sparks tax avoidance probe
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c9904dz73pyo>

'Delicate, authentic, charismatic': Dolce & Gabbana launches €99 dog perfume
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/aug/05/delicate-authentic-charismatic-dolce-gabbana-launch-perfume-for-dogs>

And last but not least, some stunning photographs of insects...

Scottish photographer captures the lives of insects in striking detail
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c39kjwrlwr8o>

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>