
North Walsham u3a Newsletter September 2022

September – the seventh month in the Roman calendar, which started in March. The Anglo-Saxons called it *Hærfestmōnath*, 'Harvest month' although after the introduction of Christianity it was called *Hāligomōnath*, 'Holy month', the nativity of the Virgin Mary being on the 8th, Holy Cross day on the 14th and St Michael's Day on the 29th.



Thanks to all you who have contributed to this month's bumper issue. Thanks especially to the digital photography group – this photo of a crested crane was supplied by R.C.S of that group. The copy deadline for next month is **Thursday September 29th**. Please send any comments or articles to me at ralph4ed@hotmail.com.

If you are at a loose end for a morning or afternoon, how about joining another group? Details of which groups meet when are on page 6. If you can't see anything you fancy, start your own!

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Thoughts from the Chair

A few weeks ago, I came across an article on the Guardian website called, 'It's the best thing I've done': over-50s on quitting work for good. It started with a bit of data on the large number of people over 50 (but under state pension age) who have retired recently and went on to report on interviews with a selection of early retirees. If you want to, you can find the article at:

<https://www.theguardian.com/money/2022/aug/17/over-50s-on-quitting-work-for-good-uk>

I wasn't one of the people interviewed but I might as well have been. Everything they said applied to me as well, from the reasons they retired early to how they felt about their post-retirement lives. It was like they'd read my mind. (For sci-fi fans, this is NOT proof that retired people are aliens with a single hive mind. We definitely don't agree about everything and, if we did have the

technology for inter-planetary travel, we'd definitely be better at recording our favourite TV programmes and using smart phones...)

I've been retired since 2016 when, at the age 57¾, I decided that 33 years working in colleges was enough. (By the way, the ¾ matters when your pension is based on years of service!) Like a lot of the people interviewed in the article, I'd enjoyed my various jobs and felt I'd made a useful contribution in each of them. But I was running out of new ideas and beginning to tread water a bit and long working days were leaving me too tired to enjoy life. And, of course, I lived in North Norfolk where, as we know, it's almost compulsory to be retired.

Anyway, based on the figures from my pension provider, I worked out that I could pay off my mortgage and still have enough to live a modest but comfortable life without working. So, I gave most of my work clothes and books to a charity shop and went overnight from 60 hour weeks to not working at all. From the first day of my new life, I stayed in bed later, starting catching up on some overdue DIY and gardening and found time to read for pleasure and watch lots of TV and movies.

A few weeks after I retired, while having a pasty and a beer in a very nice pub on Dartmoor, I remembered that it was Monday afternoon. (Yes, I had slightly lost track of time.) At work, this had been the time for probably the most tedious, pointless weekly meeting in the history of meetings. And I wasn't there! Yes, this was definitely the life I wanted...

However, after a few more months, retirement began to feel a little different. Still pleasant enough, but also a little aimless and occasionally even boring. The lack of deadlines and my own tendency to procrastinate meant that good intentions didn't always translate into getting things done and I was missing the social contact that comes with working in a college. I realised that I (literally) needed to get out more!

Then one day, purely by chance, I came across u3a while searching for a university course I might want to do. (Google took me to University of the Third Age.) And to cut a long story short, I joined North Walsham u3a and later became a committee member and then chairman. It was exactly what I needed. Something to get me out of the house, meeting other people and keeping my brain active. And it even has a timetable of 'classes' and regular meetings, so just like being back at work but a lot more fun. Ironically, committee meetings are on Monday afternoons; but, unlike the ones in my last job, they are neither tedious nor pointless and they do actually get things done.

So, in conclusion (yes, I am almost finished and you'll soon be able to stop reading this and move on to something more interesting), the moral of the story is...

- Retirement can be great
- It's even better if you do things with and for other people
- Every retired person should join a u3a (and if you know one who hasn't, tell them they should)

Best wishes,

Steve Guratsky,

Chairman, North Walsham u3a

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Covid-19 Update

As Covid-19 is still circulating, our normal precautions continue to apply. In line with Third Age Trust advice, we urge all members to consider carefully whether a face-to-face u3a meeting will be safe for them, taking into account their health, vaccination status and other relevant personal factors. We would ask anyone who is feeling unwell or who has tested positive for Covid recently not to attend. Members are welcome to wear face coverings if they wish but this will not be required.

North Walsham u3a News, September 2022

Committee News

As reported last month, a number of committee members have formed two working groups to look at ways to make North Walsham u3a even better.

One has focused on how we can best support group leaders. Based on its work so far, we will be publishing updated guidance on good practice for group leaders shortly as well as having 'A Bit of a Do' for group leaders on 9th September. If you're a group leader and have not yet told us you'd like to be there, please let Mave Edwards know before then.

The other group is looking at ways to attract and keep more North Walsham u3a members. So far, it has started to update the website, produced promotional leaflets that will be distributed locally and improved the way we make new members feel welcome at Friday meetings. Further work will be reported here in future months.

The committee is also working on our budget for 2022-23 and in particular how we can deal with rising costs without increasing our subscriptions. There will be more information about this in future newsletters and at the AGM on Friday 4th November.

We still have room for one further committee member. If you think you may be able to help, please contact me at steve.guratsky@gmail.com or on 01263-834006.

Monthly General Meetings

Following a successful general meetings in July and August, September's guest speaker will be Gary Powell, talking about 'A copper's guide to London squares'.

We'll also be giving out new programme cards at the September meeting, with lists of monthly meetings for the next year and of interest groups and when they meet.

Groups News

Most groups are now meeting face to face or are making plans to do so, while others will continue on Zoom for a while longer. If you're group leader and want to restart face to face meetings or would like to start a new group, please send Mave Edwards a message at <https://www.northwalshamu3a.org/contact-us>. Thanks. If you'd like to join a group, please send a

message at <https://www.northwalshamu3a.org/contact-us> and we'll pass it on to the group leader so they can contact you.

As always, there's lots of news about individual groups in this newsletter. If you're a group leader but don't already send Ralph Edwards regular updates about what your group is doing, please do so. It will make the newsletter even more interesting and could get new members for your group.

WANTED!



A Leader for the Film Group

You will need a reasonably sized lounge, a DVD player and access to a video streaming service, as well as a TV large enough for comfortable viewing.

Contact Groups Co-ordinator Mave via the website if you can help

Virtual Coffee Mornings

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

Interest Group Summary 26/8/2022

Group	Face to Face	Zo o m	Not Meeting	Notes	Contact
Art Appreciation	X	-	-		
Book Group	X	-	-		
Brain Games	X	-	-		
Classical Music	X	-	-		
Computing	-	X	-		
Croquet	X	-	-		
Cryptic Crosswords	X	-	-	From 15 th Sept	
Current Affairs	-	X	-		
Cycling	X	-	-		
Digital Photography	X	-	-		
Drawing and Painting	X	-	-		
Family History	-	X	-		
Folk Music	-	X	-		
Gardening 2	X	-	-		
Gardening 3	X	-	-		
History	X	-	-		
Jazz Appreciation	X	-	-		
Knit and Stitch	X	-	-		
Mac Users	-	X	-		
Mah Jong	X	-	-		
Mind, Body, Spirit	X	-	-		
Organic Allotment	X	-	-		
Philosophy	-	X	-		
Poetry	-	-	X		
Rock'n'Pop	X	-	-		
Scrabble	X	-	-		
Ten Pin Bowling	X	-	-		
U3 Sings	X	-	-		
Walking (short)	X	-	-		
Walking (long)	X	-	-		
Wine Appreciation	X	-	-		
Yoga	X	-	-		

NW u3a Groups and Days

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

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

3	Monday	Coffee Morning	Committee Meeting
	Tuesday	Yoga	Gardening 2
	Wednesday		Art Appreciation Rock & Pop
	Thursday	Current Affairs	Computer Group Cryptic Crosswords
	Friday	Philosophy	Brain Games Scrabble Mah Jong

4	Monday	Coffee Morning Painting & Drawing	Folk Music Painting & Drawing
	Tuesday	Yoga Cycling	Classical Music Cycling
	Wednesday		Knit & Stitch
	Thursday		
	Friday	Walking	Family History Gardening 3

News from the Groups

Art Appreciation

This month we had a day out and visited the Fitzwilliam Museum to see the exhibition 'Hockney's Eye. The Art and Technology of Depiction'.

'The exhibition showed how using both traditional and cutting-edge ways of making Art; it explores Hockney's obsession with how we see the world, and how our world of time and space can be captured on the surface of a flat picture' (from Fitzwilliam website).

Hockney used cameras, digital drawing, an iPad, and digital film experimenting with optical devices that were first used by Ingres' proposed use of the camera lucida and Canaletto's camera obscura.

The exhibition is very cleverly curated. His works are carefully placed next to works such as Canaletto, next to beautiful altar pieces in gold, blue and reds, wonderful Dutch miniature painted cabinets from the 16c . to show Hockney's' ideas. I was in awe of the works Canaletto etc. But not in awe of Hockney's. His digital paintings and work on iPad were shown happening before our eyes – gimmicky, I thought.

I have never liked Hockney's work and this exhibition didn't change my mind but some members of our group thought differently. Were amazed at seeing his new work and loved it. Loved the vibrant colours of red, yellow and green in his landscapes and one member found his work 'heart uplifting and revelatory.'

Not me!

But it was a good day. To be with other members of the group looking at an exhibition together and to have lunch together is always lovely.

Mave Edwards

Book Group

The U3A Book Group meets on the second Thursday of the month at North Walsham Library.

At our last meeting we discussed "Hamnet" by Maggie O'Farrell, which was set in 16th Century Stratford upon Avon and about an unnamed playwright and his family (not hard to guess who that was about!). The book describes the domestic life of the age and how death was always near, particularly as Bubonic plague was sweeping the country at the time. We hear how the family experience grief as they lose a child and the ways in which they cope.

We averaged out the marks out of ten we awarded the book and came up with "6". However, the scores ranged from 1 through to 8, which shows the diversity of feeling about the book. As you can imagine, we had a lot of interesting discussion!

September's book to discuss is "The Hippopotamus" by Stephen Fry, which I anticipate will throw up just as much lively discussion as "Hamnet". Our next meeting is on September 8th, please get in touch if you are interested in becoming a member of the group."

Yvonne Dickinson

Current Affairs

This month, we started with a wide-ranging discussion on housing, in particular, the problems facing areas such as North Norfolk due to second home ownership. Several solutions were mooted, particularly raising council tax for second home owners. It was generally felt that it was unfair that the government's help for heating will apply to every house, meaning that second home owners would get two lots of help. The right to buy council homes was suggested as a problem, as was the lack of restrictions on mortgages, meaning that 'buy to let' mortgages skewed the housing market in areas such as ours.

Our next topic was somewhat lighter, as it was about the objectors to drag queens reading stories to children in public libraries. The feeling of the meeting was that the objectors have got it wrong – nursery rhymes and fairy tales are full of very dangerous ideas; Punch and Judy shows are rife with violence and lack of respect for authority; and pantomimes have two main parts that have drag artists. There was a feeling that there was very little harm in a drag artist reading stories to children.

We had to mention the Tory party leadership election. 'None of the above' was the consensus.

After grabbing a cup of tea, the discussion moved on to Grant Shapps's proposal to introduce licences and number plates for cyclists. This was generally thought to be impractical, as well as taking a sledgehammer to crack a nut and would not be enacted.

The cost-of-living crisis was also mentioned. It was pointed out that inflation in the UK was higher than the rest of Europe, and it was posited that this was an unwanted Brexit dividend. Most of those present agreed with this proposition, with the caveat that it is always difficult in economics to definitely ascribe causes to effects.

The water companies were the next target – when they were privatised, it was promised that the more efficient private sector management would improve the infrastructure generally, but this hasn't happened. Two things could be done – re-nationalisation and closer regulation.

Finally, child care costs were mentioned – the UK has the highest costs in Europe, and the government's answer is to reduce the requirements made on the providers. This is a mistake, as children should be looked after in a safe and caring way.

Ralph Edwards

The weather over the last few weeks has been rather glorious, or maybe not depending on your point of view. For the Photo Group it's been great. Lots of sun and some invigorating sights.

August's Outing – Pensthorpe Nature Reserve, Fakenham



You Looking At Me? Picture Credit R.C.S.

The Group outing for August was to Pensthorpe Nature Reserve.

For those of you who have never been there Pensthorpe is a former gravel extraction site that has been transformed into a quite magnificent natural attraction on the outskirts of Fakenham, well signposted and easily accessible. The day of our visit coincided with a plethora of families taking children on a day out. Pensthorpe encourages this, with café/restaurant, both internal and external seating, wide variety of educational activities and a very impressive play area dotted with activities for children (young and not so young). Tickets for the day, for seniors over 60 years young, were £12.95 for the day and to make the most of it some of us turned up as they opened, 10am, (though the cafe opens at 9am) and got in a couple of hours roaming camera work/bird watching before the Group visit officially started (after lunch) at 1pm.

John, who very admirably, arranged the visit was on top form and we had a very good gathering with 11 members participating: some setting off to the gardens and some to the reserve.

There are walks and trails laid out around the reserve and following these leads to several different habitats – ponds and lakes, woods and open meadow areas. There are art exhibits along the walks with several areas of activities and bird hides. The gardens are laid out to formal and informal patterns giving good shows of different plant species. There are both wild, semi wild and captive birds. The captive birds are enclosed and separated from the wild bird area by fences, which doesn't stop the wild birds hopping over the fences to find an easy meal or three.

The pictures by our members are remarkable and show that the favourites were the cranes, several types, and flamingos.



Resting Flamingos Picture Credit S.C



Flamingo Chick Picture Credit F.J.S.



Crested Crane Picture Credit R.C.S



Common Crane Picture Credit F.J.S.

We gathered again around 4pm (some of us were earlier than others). Once again, the tea flowed like, well tea, and the cake was moist and delicious. We partook of the goodies, showed each other our pictures and discussed the day.



Millennium Garden Picture Credit A.A.



Reflections in the Woods Picture Credit R.C.S.



Move in guys, she's taking our picture. Picture Credit - G.P

I think everyone enjoyed themselves, they all looked and sounded as though they did.

Other Photographs

Every month I (because I'm the Group Leader) set a Theme for the month and this month's theme was 'People'. I think the Group are Slowly getting into this, anyway this is a selection from this month.



Broadland Rescue Picture Credit A.A



Shanty Men Picture Credit J.F.



Singing Picture Credit J.F.



The Circle Picture Credit A.A.



A Midsummer Night's Dream - The Pantaloons, Fairhaven Picture Credit F.J.S.

Bob Shortis

Drawing and Painting

The group has continued to meet on the fourth Monday of each month from 10 to 3. Not all of us can make it every time (of course), but we enjoy meeting each other and seeing what each is working on. We have space for one more member, if anyone is interested.

Maggie Guite

Gardening Group 2

We had a visit to a member's garden this month to see changes from last time we visited. We usually go at in December to make use of a barn to make Christmas table decorations and wreaths etc. Nice to see the whole garden in daylight.

Like most people's gardens some items were suffering from the drought and heatwave. Grass was quite dry and crispy. It's interesting to see what plants have thrived though, and compare with our own.

We then went to field to meet her horses, also wandered around the lake, and finally a welcome cuppa overlooking the fish pond. Thank you, Julie, it was a lovely relaxing couple of hours.



Ronnie Cooke

Jazz Appreciation

At the last meeting of the Jazz group we were honoured & delighted to welcome our U3A Groups Coordinator Mave Edwards & her chauffeur/husband Ralph to our meeting.

We had a theme for the meeting & we all contributed selections based on Oceans. Everyone chose a track & we had a chat about it. It all made for a very enjoyable afternoon. Alistair volunteered to entertain us at our next get together which will be on Monday 5th September starting as usual at 2pm.

The North Walsham U3A Jazz group meets on the first Monday of the month starting at 2pm at Honing Village Hall. We ask you to pay £2 at each session which helps to pay for the refreshments & the hire of the hall.

Contact me if you would like to give our friendly group a try, you'll be made most welcome.

Jim Costello

Organic Allotment

I spent a happy hour last week harvesting potatoes. The method used to plant them was slightly unusual – I planted the chitted seed potatoes as usual in a trench, then, when they were showing, covered with horse manure in rows. The advantage to this is that they were extremely easy to harvest – I just rootled about in the compost and lifted good crop of both Charlotte and Pink Fir Apple. The latter are our favourite and rarely available in the shops, as they are not really a commercial crop, despite frequently qualifying for Esther Rantzen's amusingly shaped vegetable prizes. They taste delicious and are always a buttery treat. I was particularly gratified to see that the crops were good despite the drought.



Ralph Edwards

Ten Pin Bowling

The next date for our friendly session is Thursday 8th September at 10.00am at "Strikers". The price is £9.95 including tea or coffee halfway through.

All are welcome to join in, a list to add your names will be by the notice board at the monthly meeting. Or you can phone 01692 403459 or 01692 407485 or email me

diane_mulligan@yahoo.co.uk

Diane Mulligan

U3Sings

It was wonderful to welcome 6 new people (Angela, Amanda, Carole, Jean, Bob and Sue) to U3Sings on Thursday 11th August. We hope you all enjoyed it and will join us again next month.

As part of our warm up, David got us to sing the alphabet in one breath. Some of us can control our breathing to do this and some of us needed to take a breath. Personally, I am hoping to get past the letter 'R' next time!

We learnt two more sections to our six-part 'Mighty Mississippi' and practised the two previously learnt. They are all about different aspects of the river including slavery, the birthplace of jazz and steamboat races and it will be fun to eventually put them all together.

Did anyone else nod off to sleep with 'Down, down, scooby dooby do che che' in their heads? 🤪

Jayne Potter

Wine Appreciation

Tony provided our selection of Wines with the object of trying two Wines of the same style or grape and make direct comparisons

The Wines and Scores were:

7.6 Graham Beck Sparkling Rose South Africa Majestic £12.99

7.0 Chapel Down Sparkling Rose England Majestic £26.99

7.0 Bruce Jack Shiraz South Africa Sainsbury's £6.00

6.7 Identity Shiraz South Africa Sainsbury's £9.00

As we find quite often, enjoyment and price are not necessarily correlated

Fortunately, Wine Price Inflation is only 3% at the moment

Cheers !

Roy Tuff

Yoga

Yoga sessions are back. Time 10am - 11.30 every Tuesday at St Benet Hall, North Walsham. It's opposite the Church. No experience is required. Come join the group. The aim is to do some stretching and relaxation and have time out for yourself once a week. Bring a blanket, a water bottle, perhaps a small towel, wear comfortable clothing and of course, yourself. I have extra yoga mats you can borrow, if you want to try before investing in one. It costs £3 per session. If you have any questions or email me via the North Walsham website under Yoga Group, otherwise, just turn up.

Joy Lloyd

September Walks 2022

7th September 10:00 am start approx. 2 miles.

Leader Chrissie Kimber. Contact via the website.

Start point Bacton Woods Car park NR28 9UE

Wednesday 14th September 10 am start approx. 4 miles

Leader Judi McKenzie Contact via the website.

Start point Butchers Arms East Ruston NR12 9JG

Friday 30th September 10:00 am start approx. 4.5 miles

Leader Chrissie Kimber. Contact via the website.

Park on the road alongside the Holy Trinity and All Saints Church. Address of church 1 Bulmer Ln, Winterton-on-Sea, Great Yarmouth NR29 4AF. Meet at the pathway to the left of the church. Lunch afterwards for those who wish to join us for lunch at the Fishermans Return Winterton.

<https://www.fishermansreturn.com/>

Some News You May Have Missed

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

'Even plants that look terminally crispy can revive': how to rescue your garden after a heatwave
<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2022/jul/22/even-plants-that-look-terminally-crispy-can-revive-how-to-rescue-your-garden-after-a-heatwave>

No watering required: a drought-resistant garden for a changing climate
<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2022/aug/19/no-watering-required-a-drought-resistant-garden-for-a-changing-climate>

Wearable fans help Japan's hot dogs beat the heat
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/02/wearable-fans-help-japans-hot-dogs-beat-the-heat>

Hens will be fed insects to lay carbon-neutral eggs for Morrisons
<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/aug/02/hens-will-be-fed-insects-to-lay-carbon-neutral-eggs-for-morrisons>

And, of course, proof that the silly season is still a real thing...

Space image was a slice of chorizo, says scientist in fake news warning
<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/space-image-was-a-slice-of-chorizo-says-scientist-in-fake-news-warning-sbsxx8cph>

Domino's retreats from Italy having failed to conquer the home of the pizza
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/10/dominos-retreats-from-italy-having-failed-to-conquer-the-home-of-the-pizza>

Man overcharged 20 rupees for India train ticket wins 22-year legal battle
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/12/man-overcharged-20-rupees-for-india-train-ticket-wins-22-year-legal-battle>

Large tortoise on the track stops Norwich to Stansted trains <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/aug/02/large-tortoise-on-the-track-stops-norwich-to-stansted-trains>

Why the long face? How a pony called Patrick was elected mayor of a Devon town – then barred from his local pub <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/aug/02/why-the-long-face-how-a-pony-called-patrick-was-elected-mayor-of-a-devon-town-then-barred-from-his-local-pub>

'These cows saved my life': the Queensland farm offering healing cattle cuddles
<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2022/aug/14/these-cows-saved-my-life-the-queensland-farm-offering-healing-cattle-cuddles>

Seal breaks into New Zealand home, traumatises cat and hangs out on couch
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/19/seal-breaks-into-new-zealand-home-traumatizes-cat-and-hangs-out-on-couch>

T-minus 10: Statistician writes formula to predict kids' backseat tantrums
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2022/aug/22/statistician-writes-formula-to-predict-kids-backseat-tantrums>

If you want to share a news story with other North Walsham u3a members, email me at Steve.guratsky@gmail.com