
North Walsham u3a Newsletter October 2026



At the latest count, the membership stood at 251, which is very good, but we haven't yet recovered to pre-Covid levels, which stood at around 280. The diversity of our groups has also increased. We currently have 37 groups ranging from Art to Wildlife Wandering. This is all very positive and reveals an organisation on the up. Please encourage any friends to join in order to get the numbers up.

Photo: John Fish

Thanks to all of you who have contributed to this month's issue. It is nice to receive everybody's contributions, particularly from those who have not previously sent articles. I am particularly pleased that so many are sending photos.

The copy deadline for next month is **Thursday October 29th**. Please send any comments or articles to me at ralph4ed@hotmail.com

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Thoughts From the Chair

Welcome to our new membership year September 2026 to August 2027 – and what a start we have had! A warm welcome to all and to our new members.

Our September monthly meeting brought 77 members, 10 new members and 8 visitors to Sacred Heart Hall – 95 people in total. I measure the success of a meeting not just by the numbers, but by the buzz of conversation around the hall, and there was certainly plenty of that. It felt warm, chatty and friendly – just as a u3a meeting should.

We also have a splendid programme of monthly meetings ahead, so there is plenty to look forward to as well as our many groups. With many new members it will be great to welcome and involve them.

As we approach our AGM in November, thoughts naturally turn to the committee and the need to have elected committee members. But this year, I have also been reflecting on something much bigger: the importance of everyone who helps to make our u3a happen.

During the past year, 49 members volunteered in some way, only 9 of which were committee members. The rest helped at our Open Morning and 20th Anniversary celebration, running groups, welcoming people, setting up rooms or taking on one of the many jobs behind the scenes, every contribution matters.

The feedback from both our Open Morning and Anniversary celebration repeatedly mentioned the team that made it possible. For me, that sums up the beauty of u3a, we are a self-help organisation which is fluid, flexible and, when extra help is needed, people step forward.

So, yes, I will shortly be asking for new committee members. I will also be asking for volunteers for tasks, and I look forward to chatting with many members about what they would like to offer and as always, any ideas.

And on that subject, please bear with the flurry of emails that may be heading your way over the next few weeks. I promise I haven't suddenly taken up email as a new u3a interest group – there are simply a few things we need to get organised for the year ahead!

But committees, risk assessments and policies are only the background infrastructure.

The real North Walsham u3a is its members. Every member, every group, every event, every welcome and every offer of help – however small – contributes to making our u3a what it is.

Warm regards to all,

Maureen

Announcements

The next monthly meeting is on Friday the 3rd of October at 2.15m at the Sacred Heart Church Hall; the speaker will be Lucy Shires who will be talking about the responsibilities as a District Councillor for North Walsham.

We will have additional tables in the hall. There will be a front table as always, a welcome table for renewals and a table where we can talk to new members about potential groups they may wish to join.

Formal notifications of the AGM will be sent in October, and nomination forms for committee members will be sent out. The AGM will be on the 6th of November and all members are invited. After the meeting, over tea and coffee there will be plenty of time to chat and share about group activities and photographs – more thoughts to follow.

U3A Social Connections Group

A new, informal group with no leader and no regular meetings — simply a WhatsApp space where members can find company for social outings. Whether you're single or your partner isn't interested in a particular activity, you can post any idea: garden centre trips, theatre or cinema visits, pub lunches, evening meals, days out, or weekends away.

If you'd prefer not to go alone, share your plan in the WhatsApp group and see who'd like to join you. Members then arrange details between themselves.

A relaxed, friendly way to enjoy activities together.

If you would like to be added to the WhatsApp Group contact Debbie Walmsley or Maureen Cavanagh.

Debbie Walmsley

NW u3a Groups and Days

Week	Day	Morning	Afternoon
1	Monday	Coffee Morning <i>Richard Nevill</i>	Jazz Appreciation <i>Jim Costello</i>
	Tuesday	Darts <i>Trevor Cheeseman</i>	
	Wednesday		Mac Users <i>Richard Nevill</i>
	Thursday		Digital Photography <i>Richard Nevill</i> Mind, Body, Spirit <i>Chrissie Kimber</i>
	Friday	Paddling Partners <i>John Harris-Hall</i>	Monthly meeting
	Sunday	Sundy Lunch <i>Jazz Waspe</i>	
Week	Day	Morning	Afternoon
2	Monday	Coffee Morning <i>Richard Nevill</i>	Classical Music <i>Jean Simpson</i>
	Tuesday		Quiz Group <i>Brenda Redding</i>
	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	Paddling Partners <i>John Harris-Hall</i>	History <i>Brenda Tibbles</i> Life Story <i>Maureen Cavanagh</i>
Week	Day	Morning	Afternoon
3	Monday	Coffee Morning <i>Richard Nevill</i>	Committee Meeting
	Tuesday		Gardening <i>Steve Guratsky</i>
	Wednesday		Rock & Pop <i>Marilyn Nevill</i>
	Thursday	Current Affairs <i>Steve Guratsky</i>	Easy Bytes <i>Richard Nevill</i> Healthy Living <i>Suzanne Lakin</i> Book Group 2 <i>Yvonne Dickinson</i>
	Friday	The Big Question <i>Steve Guratsky</i> Walking <i>Chrissie Kimber (please check first)</i> Paddling Partners (<i>John Harris-Hall</i>)	Brain Games <i>Janet Head</i> Scrabble <i>Jane Harris-Hall</i> Mah Jong <i>Ralph Edwards</i>
Week	Day	Morning	Afternoon
4	Monday	Coffee Morning <i>Richard Nevill</i>	
	Tuesday		Gardening <i>Steve Guratsky</i> Meditation <i>Chrissie Kimber</i>
	Wednesday		Knit & Stitch* <i>Brenda Tibbles</i> Art <i>Stella Shanahan</i> Quiz Group <i>Brenda Redding</i> †
	Thursday	Cryptic Crosswords <i>John Harris-Hall</i>	Tai Chi <i>Maureen Cavanagh</i>
	Friday	Family History** <i>Marilyn Nevill</i> Paddling Partners (<i>John Harris-Hall</i>)	

*Last Wednesday of the month

**Last Friday of every other month starting September

† Last Wednesday 7.30 pm

News from the Groups

Art Group

We have had a Summer break and are really looking forward to our next meeting on Wednesday 30th September in the Black Swan Theatre at 2pm. Professor Simon Willmoth will be leading the session which will be..." What do we look for in a work of Art?" Obviously, all are welcome! We agreed to keep the £5 donation each to cover costs. You can buy a drink in the pub and bring it over with you if you wish. Hoping for a good u3a turnout. Please email me if you're intending to attend.

stellashan@talktalk.net

Stella Shanahan



Book Groups

Book Group One

"Just Mercy" by Bryan Stevenson, non-fiction, tells the struggle of a young black lawyer to defend African/Americans in the south of the U.S.A. and get them a fair trial. The book centres on one man's fight for justice in particular but introduces other trials along the way. Bryan Stevenson also introduces many statistics which show how unfair the justice system is and how the colour of one's skin really does influence how the police forces investigate crime. The group were shocked to read that some of the cases being investigated took place as late as the 1990s. The book was generally well received, average score was 5.5 out of 10, and we felt that even though the British justice system is flawed, we hope that it is fairer than the American."

Book group two

"This is a new group but we are beginning to feel as though we are settling in nicely. This is the second book we have come together to discuss and, again, it was well received. "The Muse" by Jessie Burton is set during the Spanish Civil War in 1936, when an impoverished brother and sister meet the rich Anglo/Austrian Schloss family and the picture, which links both time frames, is painted. The book switches between this period and 1967 London to a young Caribbean woman working under the mysterious Marjorie Quick in the art business, when the painting from 1936 turns up. We felt the switches from 1936 to 1967 were handled well and the plot held our attention, particularly the story in Spain. We discussed the Civil War and one group member had done a little research on the period as the book had piqued her interest so was able to fill in some information. We scored an average of 7 and thought we might like to try some of Jessie Burton's other books (just as well, as one is on our reading list for a future date!)."

Yvonne Dickinson



Richard Nevill 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



In a slight change of style, the cryptic crossword group are going to share links to the crosswords we've completed, so you can download them and have a go at solving them yourselves – if you're brave enough! We will also be showing more of the workings behind the clue solving and we'd love to hear what you think. Setting up the links &c is a bit of a faff, so if nobody is actually using them, we'll probably quietly pull the plug in a couple of months. No pressure... but we'd hate to be doing all that work for nothing!

In September, we attempted to warm up with a *Guardian* "Quiptic" (no. 1170)

https://www.theguardian.com/crosswords/quiptic/1170?CMP=share_btn_url

For reasons that are not entirely clear, we found this very chewy and decided – for the first time – to abandon it after 20 minutes and start on the "main course; a *Times* cryptic (no.28489 – level 86)

<https://feeds.thetimes.co.uk/puzzles/crossword/20230102/52514/crossword-20230102-52514.pdf>

This was also a bit tough (despite being at our usual level of difficulty) but we did quickly get a few "footholds" into it. Some of the clues were solvable but seemed to be weak (the group delights in picking MERs** as they help us to learn more about the structure – and eventual solution – to clues).

Unusually, we had joint COD*s this month:

A: "Medic on track nursing rebel fighters (6)"¹

(This is a "containment" clue: Medi**C ON TR**ack nursing rebel fighters" with "rebel fighters" being the definition and "nursing" being the hint at a "containment" clue). Even though this is a fairly easy clue – once you know the answer – we took ages to see the solution and rather "overthought" the clue.

B: "What unites neo-Marxists? (6)"²

(So obvious isn't it?)

45 minutes was the solving time for this (about average). Having abandoned the "Quiptic" we decided, after a discussion about Earl Spencer and other topics, to give it another go and, despite still taxing us, we completed it in 50 minutes. An incorrect answer ("GAFFE" rather

than "GOFER" – "*Assistant rejects official scoring error (5)*") made solving another difficult clue very difficult.

There was a very unusual treble homophone clue:

"Poet penniless on drug reportedly; this might mask the small (9)"³

(The three homophones are: "**Poe**" – a poet; "**poor**" – penniless and "**drug**" – E. The indication it's a homophone clue is "reportedly")

As a group we learned much about cryptic crossword solving by persevering with this puzzle and demonstrated, once again, how solving crosswords in a group is great fun.

Our COD* for this crossword was:

"Persevere to maintain a bird as a pet (4,2,2)"⁴

("Persevere" being the definition and "maintain a bird as a pet" being cryptic – "keep a tit" for those at the back!)

Rumour has it that this was the COD because it contained the word TIT, but I couldn't possibly comment on that!

At the end of two hours we all felt our brains had had a great workout.

If you would like to join our group (we meet on the fourth Thursday in NW Library at 10am) you would be very welcome but we probably can only fit in one or possibly two more so be quick...

Contact me via the u3a website.

John Harris-Hall

*Clue Of the Day"

**Minor Eyebrow Raises"

CONTRAS¹

HYPHEN²

POTPOURRI³

KEEP AT IT⁴

Current Affairs



We were slightly depleted this month, but this didn't get in the way of a good conversation. The main topic of the day was education, starting with England's recent success in the international PISA tests.

After a coffee break we moved on to Artificial Intelligence followed by the problem of NEETs

Ralph Edwards

Gardening Group



We were delighted to visit John's garden in Walcott Green during our last meeting. It was an opulent garden, full of carefully structured beds, woodland and lawns. Standing on the edges of John's woodland it was possible to see the church of Saint Mary the Virgin and Happisburgh Lighthouse to the East (see pic 2: lighthouse is slightly right-of-centre, behind the curved copse of trees). Because John's house is surrounded by trees and located in the middle of arable farmland, it's one of those blink-and-you-miss it dwellings (pic 3).

The sensitive reconstruction of his beautiful flint and brick house is a tale in itself, but then, so is the garden. It took several months to create a garden plan which included the removal of 39 shelter-belt pine trees. In one of the photographs of John's early garden construction, it's possible to see that there was nothing but sizeable mounds of liberated sandy soil everywhere, with one (rather dwarfed) guy standing behind the piles, giving it scale. There could be no doubt that this was an immense undertaking. But now, when you stand in John's mature plot, you would think that what you saw had ever been thus, so settled and happy are his carefully placed plants (pic 1). And the garden is full of character: children have hunted in John's woodland for hidden curiosities, ranging from birds (stone owls and metallic hens with eggs) to robust seating with amusing accoutrements. Originally, John planted hedges so that when mature, you could pass through the carefully pruned gaps to discover areas beyond that were filled with shrubs, trees and perennials. Back in the day, John bagged himself quite a bargain by purchasing a load of Portuguese Laurels at £1.00 each. Now they stand well above head height, thick and shining, complete with arched openings (pic 4). John has managed to retain a gardener who was around at the garden's inception. He still helps out to this day; a truly steadfast gardener. The best kind.

Pictures on next page



Veronica Korczak

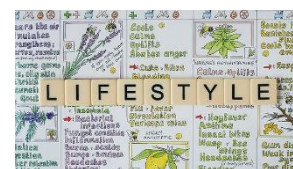
Healthy Living

We've covered such an interesting and wide range of topics during this, our first year as a group. Belonging to the U3A implies that we have reached a time of change in our lives, and this group is all about enjoying the opportunities this lovely new way of living brings. Every meeting is different, as we all share something we have learnt to help keep us healthy and happy. We have drummed, we have meditated, we have reflexologised ourselves, tapped ourselves, relaxed with hypnotherapy and learned about how our bodies work along with so much else!! Next month – an introduction to Tai Chi !

Of course, we need a resident qualified expert to keep us all together – and we are so lucky to have lovely. Chirpy Susanne to lead us.

Jazz Waspe

September is just Summer sneaking in with a cozy jumper. Aurelia Leafsong



Paddle Group

September gave us some lovely paddling, with outings from various locations around the Broads, including Wayford Bridge and Hoveton. Numbers were a little down on usual, largely because several members were off enjoying themselves elsewhere, but those of us who remained were rewarded with kind weather and waterways that were noticeably quieter than during the busy summer months. Fewer boats, fewer holidaymakers and, thankfully, fewer opportunities for close encounters with large cruisers!



We normally continue paddling throughout October, weather permitting, and may even squeeze in the occasional outing in early November if conditions are favourable. However, the end of our paddling season is now approaching. We expect to launch again around April, although, as ever, the weather will have the final say.

Our new members have made a terrific contribution to what has been a very successful season. Their enthusiasm, knowledge and previous paddling experience have been particularly useful in helping us develop how the group operates. It's great to see the group continuing to evolve.

We're always happy to welcome new paddlers. We don't provide kayaks, other equipment or formal coaching, but we are a friendly bunch and there is usually plenty of advice available — along with several willing pairs of hands to help with the loading and unloading!

If you fancy joining us next season and would like to know more, please get in touch via the NW U3A website.



John Harris-Hall

Quiz Group



The quiz is held in the Black Swan theatre room in North Walsham on the last Wednesday of the month starting at 730pm.

September's quiz night is next week (30th September).

At present there are several places vacant.

We have 2 tables booked with room for 6 people on each table.

If you would like to come along and join us for an evening of fun and testing your knowledge (it's not test! Mainly a social evening) please email either Brenda Redding or Karen Fox to book a place

Bredding@tiscali.co.uk

Dollydaydreams100@hotmail.com

October's quiz date is Wednesday 28 October

Brenda Redding & Karen Fox

Tai Chi

Seven Moves and Counting!

We had our monthly Tai Chi session with Rachael on 24 September, and it felt like a bit of a turning point — we managed a flowing sequence of seven moves!



Tai Chi movements have wonderful traditional names, developed over many centuries to help us picture and remember the actions. Our sequence included Commencing the Form, Parting the Horse's Mane, Brush Knee and Push, Wave Hands Like Clouds, Repulse the Monkey, High Pat on Horse and a particular favourite, Golden Rooster Stands on One Leg — which certainly tested our balance!

By the end of the session we had tired legs, a much better appreciation of balance and concentration, and that lovely feeling Tai Chi brings of being both relaxed and energised.

If you would like to give Tai Chi a try, you are very welcome to join us. We meet on the fourth Thursday of each month.

For more information, contact Maureen at cavanagh_m@yahoo.co.uk.

Maureen Cavanagh

Ten Pin Bowling

We had a good time playing our friendly matches. It was good to see Stella back with us, she hadn't lost her eye for the target as she achieved a couple of strikes which she celebrated joyfully. Nena was on top form too also Mike Dallimore.

We did feel a bit strange as I was unable to book our normal alleys, but rest assured we have booked 2 and 3 next month, so that is good.

The next date for your diary is 8th October 10.00 am at Strikers £12.00 for 2 hours, including tea or coffee, all are welcome, the list will be by the raffle table. Also you can email diane_mulligan@yahoo.co.uk or phone 07512698934

Diane Mulligan



U3Sings



We did a lot of singing during our September get together and we all went home happy and relaxed!

David, our wonderful teacher and pianist took us through Banaha, Dona Nobis Pacem, Gaudete, Rhythm of Life, Sloop John B, The Mighty Mississippi and Jonah-Mann-jazz.

Our October session is on Thursday 8th at 1.45pm in The Sacred Heart Church Room, North Walsham. Come and join us for a free taster session.

Patsy Tomlinson and Margaret Jeppesen

Wildlife and Woodland Wanderers

Autumn has definitely arrived, and on a wonderfully bright, crisp morning two groups of the WWW set off to explore Pigney's Wood. Although much of this woodland is relatively young, it has certainly stood the test of time. The magnificent 450-year-old oak stands proud, and you can't help but wonder what stories it might tell if we could hear its voice.



We followed the remains of an ancient path — a route walked for so many generations that it now lies below the level of the tree roots themselves. As we continued our wander, the earthy, rich smell of the woodland rose around us, a gentle reminder of the changing seasons and the quiet shift towards autumn.

Our route took us through a diverse mix of habitats: woodland, canal-side paths, open heathland and meadow. The trees are beginning to turn, with hints of gold and russet appearing among the green. Conkers and sweet chestnuts scattered the ground, and we found the last of the season's blackberries and sloes tucked along the hedgerows.

Debbie Walmsley

October Walks 2026

Walking Group Coordinator

Chrissie Kimber at rebnikc@btinternet.com



Tuesday October 6th start time 9:30 approx 5.5 miles

Walk leader Andrew Lamymand

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 23rd October 10:00 am approx. 6 miles

Walk leader Maureen Cavanagh

Start point Car parking along High Street, Overstrand, NR27 OAB, and meet opposite the Sea Marge Hotel. There is usually plenty of parking along here. There is also a bus service to Overstrand.

Circular walk from Overstrand to Northrepps, cool woodland and superb views of the sea.

I suggest for those that want to, that we visit the White Horse Overstrand for lunch. If people can please let Maureen at the start of the walk if you wish to have lunch afterwards