

Newsletter
November 2025

The Kelpies, near Falkirk in Scotland, photographed by a member. More inside. We also have a Quiz all about Scotland!



Please send in more photographs. They need not have anything to do with groups' activities. They just have to be attractive!

FROM OUR ACTING CHAIR

Missing Chair

During the last year we have had a Broken Chair, now it's gone missing and we are still looking for someone to grab the arms of that chair. The situation remains that the Constitution requires the position to be filled and we cannot operate without one.

On the Good News front, the committee organised a very successful New Members Meeting recently. 77 new members since last September were invited, and 40 people attended, for coffee and chat and to meet with the committee and some group leaders. We received some very positive responses and joining of some groups.

Please help the committee if you can offer any assistance.

Ian (Acting Chair, on behalf of the Committee)

FROM OUR COMMITTEE

Our Committee Members

| Role | Name | email |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Chair | Ian Holland (Acting) | chair@hunstantonu3a.org |
| Vice Chair | Angela Blenkinsop | vicechair@hunstantonu3a.org |
| Secretary | Virginia Young | secretary@hunstantonu3a.org |
| Treasurer | Pat Eckersall | treasurer@hunstantonu3a.org |
| Membership Secretary | Margaret Oates | memsec@hunstantonu3a.org |
| Events Co-ordinator | Verity Mitchell | events@hunstantonu3a.org |
| Webmaster & Beacon Admin | Ian Holland | web@hunstantonu3a.org |
| Publicity | Verity Mitchell | publicity@hunstantonu3a.org |
| Speakers Secretary | Angela Blenkinsop plus Ann McKimm from Jan 2026 | speakers@hunstantonu3a.org |
| Groups Co-ordinator | Jacquie Yaxley | groups@hunstantonu3a.org |
| IT | Norman Mitchell | it@hunstantonu3a.org |
| Long Standing Member (Co-opted) | Sylvia Pratt | newsletter@hunstantonu3a.org |
| Co-opted Member | Spencer Cotton | spencer.cotton@hunstantonu3a.org |
| Co-opted Member | Helen Beynon | helen.beynon@hunstantonu3a.org |

By clicking on any email address in this list, you can email the committee member directly. Remember that you can also contact any member of the Committee by going to the Hunstanton u3a website and clicking on "Contact Us".

If you have an issue or query that you would like discussed at the next committee meeting, or wish to see the minutes of a particular committee meeting, please contact the Secretary with your request along with your full contact details.

FROM OUR GROUPS

Art Appreciation (1)

Visit to Jesus College Chapel and the Painted Church

We stepped from the hurly-burly of traffic-filled Cambridge streets into the peace of Jesus College with its extensive grounds and fine buildings. Led by our excellent Guide, Gerald, we passed the cloisters of the original nunnery and into the College Chapel where we were enveloped by the sound of organ-playing and the sight of carved and polished dark wood, high decorated ceilings and light filtering through stained glass.

The current building is the result of major reconstruction work from the mid-19th century in the then fashionable Gothic Revival and Arts and Crafts styles by architects, Pugin and G.F. Bodley with interiors by William Morris and stained glass by pre-Raphaelite artists Burne-Jones and Ford Madox Brown. The panelled ceilings of the nave and the tower were designed by William Morris. We were also able to admire various sculptures in the chapel and the grounds before lunch.

In the afternoon we crossed the road to All Saints' Church, known as the Painted Church. The church was built and decorated at a similar time to the Chapel and so reflects a similar style. No longer an active church but supported by volunteers and regularly animated by music concerts.

We stepped through the original swing doors and saw almost every surface, including the exposed roof itself, stencilled or hand-painted in greens, reds and golds with delicate flowers, foliage, fruits, birds, and Christian symbology intertwined with Biblical texts. The light pours through stained glass by William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones, Ford Madox Brown and Philip Webb. Bold silk hangings surround the altar table, faded over time, but reflecting Bodley's vision of a 14th century English Gothic church.

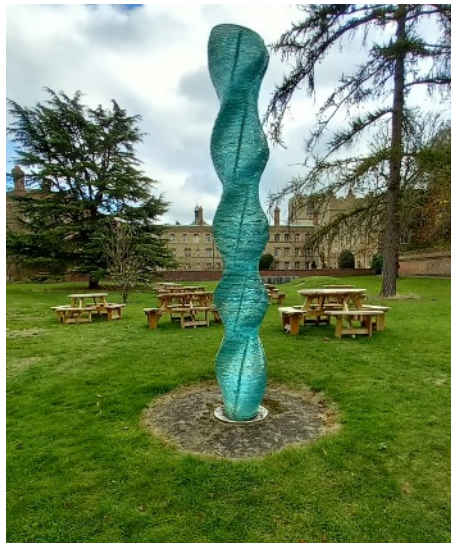
Although we can open an illustrated book and read about and see the images of the artistic work of previous times it is a privilege to enter the spaces and encounter the works themselves. Thank you to Jill and Sue.

Claire

On the next page is a collage of photographs taken on the day



Interior of Jesus College Chapel



A sculpture in Jesus College grounds



Ornate tiling on the floor of part of the Chapel



Interior of the Painted Church

Birdwatching

The newly re-formed Bird Watching Group had a flying start (pun intended) in June this year. On a sunny but breezy morning nine members met for a walk around the Snettisham Coastal Park.

The first thing everybody heard was the beautiful purring sound of the turtle dove. This was heard many times as the group wandered along the paths below the sea bank. The delightful chiffchaffs serenaded us from the start and a spoonbill flew over just as we left the car park.

Derek certainly knows his birds and along the way he pointed out the sounds and sights of so many different birds including: Turtle Dove, Blackbird, Greenfinch, Wren, Great Tit, Blue Tit, Sedge Warbler, Linnet, Stonechat and the wonderful sight of a Meadow Pipit seen through Derek's scope. At the same time flying overhead was the wonderful sight of both a male and female Marsh Harrier. A Cetti's Warbler was heard but sadly not seen. Buzzards, Swifts, Swallows, Little Egret all were seen flying overhead.

When the group reached the beach there were Oystercatcher, Black Headed Gulls and of course the delightful Ringed Plovers which nest on the beach.

Our next three meetings were at RSPB Titchwell during the long hot summer (remember that!) and were evening walks when the reserve visitors had mostly gone home for the day and we had the reserve almost to ourselves (with the exception of the midges – fortunately no-one got badly bitten). On our first one we were so lucky to hear a grasshopper warbler but unfortunately were unable to see it. The lists of birds we saw are too long to put here but safe to say we saw over 35 different species both from the West Bank Path and from the hides. Once again the group was ably led by Derek whose ability to name every bird we saw was pretty

phenomenal.

We arranged to go to NWT Cley in September but unfortunately not enough members were able to go so it was cancelled – hopefully we can manage to go in the New Year. We didn't manage to see the high tide spectaculars at Snettisham this year but again hope to include it in next year's program.

Our latest meeting was at the end of October where we went back to the Snettisham coastal park on a rather dank and dismal day. Fortunately, the rain stayed away and there was no wind. Birdies don't like wind and birders don't like rain. At first it seemed rather quiet, but we were once again lucky enough to see flocks of redwings pouring in. Sadly they didn't want to pose for us but Derek managed to see one sitting in a bush. There were probably fieldfares among the flocks as well, but they were difficult to see as silhouettes against the grey sky. Down at the beach we saw a Grey Plover and out at sea a lone swan bobbing around on the waves – probably a whooper swan stopped for a rest.

Our last meeting of the year will be in early December when we hope to go to NWT Welney to see the whooper swans.

Jacquie Yaxley

Singing For Pleasure

Incredible as it seems, our Singing for Pleasure group has been up and running since May 2015, that's 10 years 6 months of fun, friendship and music. Over that time, although we've sadly lost some good friends who we remember with great fondness, we've grown in musical knowledge/appreciation and in numbers until today we total 28 members.

We meet every other Friday at Snettisham Memorial Hall from 10 to 12 and we're happy to welcome prospective new members. We pride ourselves on being approachable and inclusive, and over the years we've seen many firm friendships develop among the group.

Ably and patiently led by Dianne Welham and her husband Alec (Mr Piano Man), we are encouraged to sing the odd solo if we'd like to, but most of us just enjoy singing along with the group. Our repertoire ranges from fun songs, show tunes, world music, spirituals, folk music and the odd pop song, and we're open to suggestions from the group of songs that will broaden our horizons.

Most of us don't read music or have fantastic voices, although some do, but we have one thing in common – we love to sing and appreciate the health benefits singing gives us. Before each session, Dianne does a warm-up which involves a few simple yoga moves, flexing and relaxing our muscles and breathing and posture techniques which enable our vocal chords to work to their full potential. Anyone walking into the hall while we're 'trying to free that lump of toffee stuck between our teeth', doing the 'lion pose' with our hands and faces, veering from widely smiling to frowning, sirening our voices and trilling up and down the chords may well wonder what sort of group they've stumbled into! but it works. We generally make a lovely sound once we've learnt a piece, and we often do a three or even on occasions a four-part harmony.

If you're looking to make new friends, broaden your horizons and enjoy the benefits of singing with no criticism of your ability – contact us for a taster session.

Mariana



Environment group



Change of group name

Previously we were known as the Climate Change and Environmental Group and, although the climate change crisis is far from resolved, a good understanding of the issues involved and the actions that need to be taken have been identified.

The scope of our activities has expanded to cover a much wider field of the environment, for example:

Sustainability

Sustainable environment

Air – pollution including CO₂ (climate change)

Water – sea and freshwater pollution

Land – pollution, land use change

Sustainable energy

Renewable energy sources

Off-setting, carbon tax, carbon capture

Energy plan for the UK

Sustainable use of natural resources

Elements

Fossil fuels

Mineral resources

Biomass

Circular economy

Circular economy

Reuse, recycling

Eco-labels, product certification, DPP

Examples: Sustainable construction

Circular economics

Environment law

International

UK

We are a self-learning group which means that one or more members of the group select a subject to research and this forms the basis of our discussions.

Ken Hamilton Group leader

Art Appreciation (2)

The Sweatshirt!



The Art Appreciation group has adopted a sweatshirt with the legend “find the Art in everything”. One idea behind it is that, when the group has an outing, it is easy to identify group members. The joint group leaders, Jill Davis (pictured here on the right) and Sue Sullivan, will be wearing the bright pink version so that they will stand out from the crowd and be visible to everyone!

No excuse for getting lost now...

FROM OUR MEMBERS

The Kelpies

The Kelpies’ home is Helix Park, Falkirk in Scotland. At thirty meters tall they tower, shimmering in the light over the Forth & Clyde Canal. Duke (head down) and Baron (head back) honour the old Clydesdale draught horses that pulled the barges along the canal.

Designed by Andy Scott they are made of stainless steel and at night give out a stunning light show.

Barbara Harding



HUG Entertains!

The Ukulele Group came to entertain the residents of The Gables in Dersingham on Friday 24th of October and gave us a very entertaining hour or so. As I looked around I saw fingers and feet tapping and a few singing. I spoke to a 22-year-old member of staff on Saturday and she thoroughly enjoyed their music and was sorry she had to go as it was the end of her shift.

Another stayed on after her shift had finished and again enjoyed it as much as we did.

During the pause for refreshments several members of the group came round to talk to us and let us have a look at the instruments.

I am sure I speak for all at The Gables we hope to see and hear them again in the near future.

Thank you to the members of HUG.

Sylvia

Your u3a Needs You!

Yes, you. Especially if you have recently joined us.

The u3a is a mutual help organisation. This means that every member has a responsibility to help their fellow members. Unlike a normal club, we cannot just elect a Committee and let them get on with it.

No members are paid anything for their efforts. Our tiny £13 membership fee, apart from the £4 per member that goes to support the u3a movement at the centre, goes on monthly meeting costs, equipment purchases, publicity (to encourage new members) and information for existing members (such as the handbook) and the upkeep of our Beacon membership system.

At the September Members' Meeting we changed our constitution to allow for the fact that many Committee members had been in post for the maximum period (nine years) and very few u3a members had come forward to take over their roles. So we extended that period to twelve years, thus neatly putting off the need to take hard decisions now. Most important, we had to appoint an Acting Chair (Ian) because no-one had come forward to take over that role.

It must be stressed that **it is forbidden to run a u3a if any one of its officer roles is not filled**. Ian has stated that he will stand down after three months in post. He has a huge job with his work as webmaster and Beacon Administrator plus helping a host of other u3as with their websites, so he cannot sensibly commit himself any further than that. If the Chair post is not filled in the meantime our u3a will cease to exist. It will be wound up and all of the money that we have in our accounts will then be returned to the central u3a.

How has this come to pass?

With few exceptions, when members join us they expect to be served by exiting members and group leaders. Those already in post, they assume, have the experience required – and if they need replacing then other experienced members can take over – and they can sit back and behave as customers.

There are two things wrong with that assumption. The first, as I mentioned in my first paragraph, is that we are a mutual help organisation and we all have a responsibility to contribute our time, and talents. We are **members**, not customers. The second is that longer-serving members have normally been retired longer and been living in the area longer. Also, they have filled their time well (often with u3a activities). As a result, not only do they have less time, but, being older than our average new member, they have less energy and it has been longer since they practised the skills that they developed during their careers.

The conclusion is clear. **The ideal people for taking on Committee and group leader tasks are newer members**. Many of the current Committee, and the longer-standing group leaders, shared similar experiences to me. I joined the u3a at age 63, around a dozen years ago, having just moved into the area. Within a few months I was a group leader (the Climate group). Within little over a year, I was Chair. Not because I wanted to be, but because I was asked to do it. It was clearly going to be a great way to get to know the u3a and local people, and so it proved.

My experience has been repeated by many others. It worked for me, and it worked for them.

Some u3as encourage the involvement of newer members by having each Committee post “shadowed” by another member. They can share some of the tasks, and they are ready to take over once the Committee member steps down. I know that many of my fellow members feel that we should do that. But who should we ask?

There's the rub! It is hard for the Committee to know whom to approach. But that shouldn't be necessary. Our members should be putting themselves forward without prompting! Your current Groups Co-ordinator did just that. Having been recently retired, she joined our u3a and almost immediately contacted the Committee and asked whether there was anything she could help with. She is now well-known, and well-liked, by our members and is doing a great job (I know, because I was one of her predecessors in the Groups Co-ordinator role).

On the second page of this Newsletter is a list of Committee members. With one click on that list, you can get in touch with any of them. They will be delighted to hear from you.

You know it makes sense!

David LeMoir Concerned member

(Former roles: Chair, Groups Co-ordinator, Leader of Climate group

Current roles: Leader of Play Reading 2 and Rock Music Appreciation groups, Newsletter Sub-editor)



Many of our Group leaders, snapped at the AGM in October

Forthcoming Meetings

All meetings at 2:00pm unless otherwise stated

- 17th November** **Oh Yes It Is!**, a talk by Jim Stebbings
The History of the English Pantomime
- 15th December** Christmas Party. STARTS 1:00pm. Booking necessary, at November Members' Meeting
- 12th January 2026** **Forty Years of BBC Radio Norfolk**, a talk by Wally Webb
How Radio has changed since the introduction of local radio around 1980, with many amusing stories.

QUIZ

Scotland

By Sue Hutcheson

1. When is St Andrew's Day celebrated?
2. What is date of the Battle of Bannockburn?
3. Where is the annual Celtic festival of the Mod held?
4. What is the name of the river dividing Scotland and England?
5. In which town is the Wallace Monument?
6. Which Scottish painter, who died in March of this year, was best known for his painting of the Singing Butler?
7. Which city is regarded as The Capital of the Highlands?
8. Which British Prime Minister lived at The Hirsell, and where is it situated?
9. What do the Scots call New Year's Eve?

10. Who was the physician and microbiologist who discovered penicillin?
11. Which poet was named “the greatest bad verse writer of his age”?
12. Where is Donald Trump's Scottish golf club situated?
13. Where will you find the neolithic village of Skara Brae?

Answers at the end of the Newsletter

FROM OUR EDITOR

Welfare

If you know of any member who is ill or has recently suffered a bereavement please contact Karen, our Welfare member. Karen will then send a suitable card from the u3a. Email welfare@hunstantonu3a.org

Change of Circumstances

If you change your address, telephone number (landline and/or mobile) or email address please ensure that you pass the new details to memsec@hunstantonu3a.org

Newsletter Copy Date

Items for the next newsletter are required by MONDAY 8th DECEMBER 2025. Please send them to **BOTH** Sylvia at newsletter@hunstantonu3a.org **AND** David at subeditor@hunstantonu3a.org. You will receive an acknowledgement of your contribution.

Please submit them in WORD or odt (e.g. from Libre Office) as email attachments. If you are including photographs, we need them as separate files – please do not embed them in the document as that causes us problems! No PDFs please.

Thank You to.....

Our thanks to all who have contributed to this month's newsletter. Group Leaders: please encourage your members to tell us about one of your meetings. Please don't leave it to just a few groups to let us know what is happening.

Answers to the Quiz

1. 30th November
2. 1314
3. Oban
4. The Tweed
5. Stirling
6. Jack Vettriano
7. Inverness
8. Sir Alec Douglas-Home; near Coldstream in Berwickshire
9. Hogmanay
10. Alexander Fleming
11. William McGonagall
12. Balmedie, Aberdeenshire
13. Sandwick, Mainland, Orkney