



Hunstanton
u3a
 learn, laugh, live
Newsletter
December 2025



Last Christmas, we inadvertently missed out this photograph of a Christmas pudding made of flowers, produced by the Flower Arranging Group. We put it into the January 2025 issue, but this year we give this beautiful arrangement pride of place at Christmas itself.



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

FROM OUR JOINT CHAIR

In the Spirit of Christmas, I bring you some good news. We have a new Joint Chair who is Hilary Farrell. Many of you will know her from being our treasurer about 10 years ago and also from her Mah Jong training groups. I will leave her to introduce herself in our next newsletter.

My theme this month is the Spirit of Christmas.

Positive Sentiments

Joy and Merriment: This is the most classic and celebrated sentiment. It's the feeling of festivity, fun, and general happiness often expressed through music, decorations, and gatherings.

Goodwill and Generosity: There is a strong emphasis on kindness, giving, and charity, often linked to feelings of purpose and satisfaction from helping others.

Nostalgia: The season often evokes a sentimental longing for the past, reminding people of cherished childhood memories and traditions, which can be comforting and grounding.

Hope and Renewal: Closely tied to the end of the year, Christmas offers a psychological sense of reset, hope for the future, and new possibilities in the coming year.

Continued...



Peace and Comfort: For many, the holiday brings a sense of inner peace, especially in reflection on religious or spiritual meaning, or simply enjoying cozy, quiet moments.

Challenging Sentiments

Stress and Overwhelm: The pressure to create a "perfect" holiday – including shopping, hosting, cooking, and navigating a busy social calendar – can lead to significant stress and anxiety.

Loneliness and Isolation: For those who are socially isolated, far from loved ones, or recently bereaved, the emphasis on togetherness can amplify feelings of loneliness and grief.

Financial Pressure: The expectation of expensive gift-giving and celebratory spending can cause anxiety and stress, especially for those with financial constraints.

Grief and Loss: The holiday can be a painful reminder of loved ones who are no longer present, intensifying feelings of sadness and bereavement.

Pressure to Be Happy: The pervasive cultural expectation to be "jolly" can make it difficult for people struggling with mental health issues to express or deal with their true feelings.

I leave you with those thoughts, I can certainly relate to many of those feelings after losing my wife Thelma who caught the flu last Christmas day and passed some 3 weeks later.

Happy Christmas to you all and a Prosperous New Year

Ian

FROM OUR COMMITTEE

Our Committee Members

Role	Name	email
Joint Chair	Hilary Farrell	chair@hunstantonu3a.org
Joint Chair	Ian Holland	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

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.

Groups Update

It's now just over a year since I joined the u3a, and nine months since becoming Groups Co-Ordinator, and what a year it's been. I've **LEARNT** so much, I've **LAUGHED** an awful lot and of course I've **LIVED**. I've met some lovely people and really enjoyed hearing their backstory of why they joined the u3a and what they



did before the u3a captured their imagination. On top of that some of you have become friends!

We now have over 60 interest groups active. Some groups closed during the last year, mainly due to reaching the end of their “shelf life” after many years, and many new ones have opened. The latest group to open is **Classical Music Appreciation** which will have its first meeting early in January and we have three more on the drawing board:

Creative Prose Writing is set to take over from Writing for fun

Machine Sewing for Beginners (watch this space!)

Badminton

If you have ideas for new groups then do let me know. Our bucket list group leader is struggling to get members to come forward so do please let him know if you have something you’d like to do as a one-off but don’t want to do it alone; there’s usually someone else who wants to do it. Three members are interested in a hot air balloon flight and one would love to go to Paris for the day.

As an aside I often hear folk moaning about the dark evenings but... did you know that it won’t be long until the evenings start drawing out again. Sunset today (7th December) in Hunstanton is 15:41, the earliest sunset of the year, but by the 18th December it’s already one minute lighter in the evening! Spring isn’t too far away.

Wishing you all you would wish yourself for Christmas and the New Year and see you all on the other side.

Jacquie Yaxley Groups Co-Ordinator

FROM OUR GROUPS

Visit to Norwich castle



On Wednesday 12 November 28 members of the art appreciation group travelled to Norwich to visit the castle. We went by shared cars and most went to the airport park and ride. The bus journey from there is easy and conveniently stops outside the castle. After showing our tickets we assembled in the rotunda at the information desk. Sadly, the main lift was out of order but smaller lifts took us first to the cafe for a coffee break and then up to the main castle keep which has recently been refurbished to look as it was in 1121. The original floors have long gone but careful restoration has installed floors and enabled us to see as it once was.

We entered through a glazed bridge from which the outer walls of the keep were visible arriving into the great hall. The hall is surprisingly large and the high roof beams I was told are original. It looked very splendid.

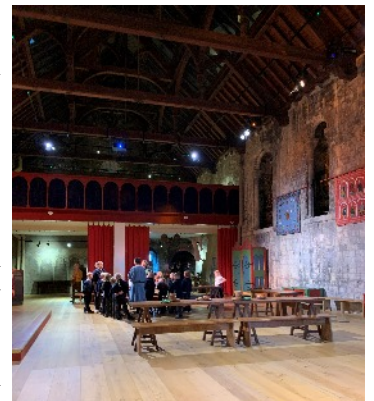
The hall is set out for a feast with a dais for the high table and throne, three side tables with benches, wooden platters and model food. Other fittings around the walls. When we arrived a group of primary children were being told about the castle by two guides dressed in medieval costume which made a lively scene.

The furniture and fittings throughout have been made as authentic as possible.

Beyond the great hall was a small kitchen and the four garderobes (toilets) were built into the wall of

the keep.

To the side of the great hall was the great chamber which was furnished with a large bed and authentic furniture. This was the private space for the king or constable. Around the wall is an embroidered tapestry made by the Norwich friends depicting the early history of the castle. I wished I had brought my





binoculars to view it in more detail as it is high up. Beyond this great chamber was a chapel which had a sanctum in the apse with the original sculptures on the walls.

Later in our visit after the children had gone there was a projection of scenes on the walls of the hall illustrating the early history of the castle which was beautifully done and splendid to watch.

On the floor below the great hall is the gallery of medieval life which has been set up in conjunction with the British museum I found this fascinating and could have spent more time in it. Artefacts from all over Britain are displayed and explained.

Below this is the basement with the well.

Some people went up to the battlements at the top of the keep for a great view over Norwich but as the main lift was not working and I could not manage the stairs I did not make it.

Most people had lunch in the cafe. Some went on a guided tour of the other parts of the museum where there is lots more to see.

It was a great day out.

Marian Rowe



The new Art Appreciation sweatshirt has proved very popular. Here it is, in a variety of colours, being sported at the Norwich Castle visit.





Cryptic Crosswords

We decided to put together a cryptic crossword for the Christmas issue of the Newsletter.

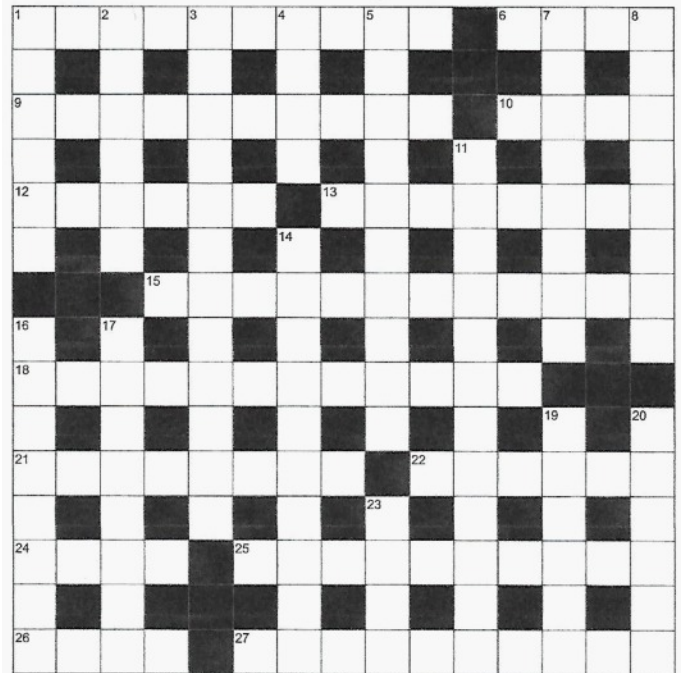
Pat sourced an empty crossword grid and, as with the one that we created for the July 2025 issue, we made a start by filling in some of the words at the end of one of our meetings, and then left Ray with the job of finishing it off. This was very tough because, as it happens, every word has an even number of letters and many of them needed to be quite long or made up of multiple words.

Also, we had left Ray with a number of Christmassy words, already filled in; finding words or phrases to fit around them turned out to be rather tricky. But he succeeded and left us with the far easier job of concocting clues to fit.

By no means all of the answers are seasonal, but we have made some of the clues for other words fit the festive theme.

ACROSS

- 1 Rudolph swallows a large insect. It's growing up (10)
- 6 Saint Nick, in pink, starts to make cuts (4)
- 9 Settle one gap around where books carry the words "A Christmas Carol" (5,5)
- 10 Area starts to anticipate Christmas rather enthusiastically (4)
- 12 Priest has grim expressions (6)
- 13 In manor, angelic Christmas stocking filler found (2,6)
- 15 Polyonymy has them, I hear guys: Caspar was one of them (5,4,3)
- 18 Fifteen came from afar (1,4,3,4)
- 21 Spooner heard man from Esbjerg back into dancer (8)
- 22 Merrily or verily, it tells you how something happened (6)
- 24 Dim American shelters cleric (4)
- 25 Ken's verbal rambling; it has rhythm but no rhyme (5,5)
- 26 Come ye shepherds, bearing watches (4)
- 27 Top achievement from multicultural society (7,3)



DOWN

- 1 Home counties aristocrat may cause explosion (3,3)
- 2 Start of play about lawsuit (6)
- 3 Argh! I don't see. Awful. The cheapest seats... (3,2,3,4)
- 4 Dame gets drunk on tippie (4)
- 5 No West Ham novices start playing in Christmas TV cartoon (3,7)
- 7 Clink (8)
- 8 The younger generation smartens up around alien (8)
- 11 Walker with uniform shows how the snow was on Boxing Day: not deep (5,3,4)
- 14 Outcome for labour minister who crossed the floor and suffered cyanosis (6,4)
- 16 Cooked without fat; turned into a Twister! (4,4)
- 17 No time within December 25th to get on top (8)
- 19 Rip to pieces and become emotional (4,2)
- 20 Express dislike of messy job etc (6)
- 23 One says one is an idiot (4)

The solution is on the final page of this Newsletter. Good luck!

David LeMoir



Arty Facts

The November meeting of the Arty-Facts group was another of our most popular events – presentations by u3a members.

Kath Fryer's talk was titled *John Ruskin and the PRB*. John Ruskin was a highly influential 19th century art critic who took the time to ask the artists, who called themselves the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, what their philosophy involved. In spite of criticism from some of the well-known figures of the day, it was Ruskin who accepted the value of their work and gave the artists "the oxygen of publicity", without which we might not be enjoying their paintings today. Kath told us how she had first discovered this small group of artists when visiting Birmingham Cathedral and saw the stunning stained-glass windows designed by Edward Burne-Jones. There was also a notice in the cathedral about a talk on the Pre-Raphaelites. From that moment she was hooked.



Jane Morris

Kath selected fine examples of the work of William Morris, who was the prime mover of the group (*La Belle Iseult*), Dante Gabriel Rossetti (*Jane Morris*), John Everett Millais (*The Blind Girl*), and Edward Burne-Jones (*The Golden Stairs*). What these paintings demonstrated was a new kind of art, in stark contrast to the classic landscapes and portraits of the day that were acceptable to the Royal Academy whose president, Sir Joshua Reynolds, the PRB nicknamed Sir Slossua Reynolds! These young, idealistic men wanted art to return to the style before the time of Raphael, the great master of the Renaissance. The paintings should be based on topics of a serious, religious, or romantic nature. The subjects should be painted from direct observa-

tion and use materials to create intense luminosity. A good example of this is William Holman Hunt's *Our English Coasts* depicting sheep beside the sea whose wool appears so real you think you could reach out and touch it.



The Last of England



Stained glass window at Birmingham Cathedral



Our English Coasts

While the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood did not last as an organised group for long, their work influenced many artists and still provide us with thought-provoking subjects to gaze upon and admire today through the help of John Ruskin.

Kath ended her talk with another intriguing painting, her favourite, though not by one of the PRB group. It is Ford Madox Brown's *The Last of England* dating from 1855. Take a look at the intense colours and expressions of the characters depicted. They are emigrating, perhaps with some concerns but also clear determination to start a new life. Can you spot the little hand being grasped by the mother who is shielding her baby inside her cloak?



Yarmouth Jetty (John Crome 1810-1814)

Some of you will know Barbara King's name as that of a local artist who exhibits in Norfolk and London as a member of the West Norfolk Artists Association. She graduated in Art History from the University of London and did her dissertation on *The Norwich School of Painters*.

She very kindly agreed to come and talk to us about this group of artists that has left a legacy of well-known paintings. So we were introduced to artists such as John Crome, John Sell Cotman, Joseph Stannard and James Stark. These were prolific artists, working class and without patronage. They earned their living by teaching art and their pupils were often joined by their own children who followed in their footsteps.

Initially Crome and Ladbrooke met in a pub to discuss their philosophy of art and then they set up a club. John Sell Cotman joined the group later. The group flourished for 30 years or more and many of their paintings were bought by Jeremiah Colman, the mustard manufacturer in Norwich. These paintings were eventually hung in Norwich Castle Museum where I recall seeing them in 1966.

This art movement was the first provincial one in Britain and it remained pure in a sense because it wasn't influenced by what was going on elsewhere. Instead, it was much influenced by Dutch masters Hobbema and Ruisdael who painted in the Dutch Realist style. The artists painted nature as it was around Norwich – not as



Norwich River: Afternoon
(John Sell Cotman 1812-1819)

it might be in a representation.

Barbara explained that another of the reasons that the artists were not very well appreciated in their time was that Norwich was quite cut off from London and the art world at the time of the early 1800s. The road network was limited. Although eventually a few of the Norwich School went to London, there were never exhibitions there of their work. It wasn't until 2000 that the Tate Britain put on an exhibition!

We are grateful to Barbara for enlightening us about the work of artists who deserve greater exposure, but for us locals we can see their paintings in the Norwich Castle or in Mandell's Gallery in Elm Street Norwich. This gallery holds several Norwich School



Thorpe Water Frolic: Afternoon
(Joseph Stannard 1824)

paintings.

The next meeting of Arty-Facts will be on January 24th, 2026, when another of our members, Claire Todd, will conduct a session titled *Exploring Famous Paintings*.

Carolyn McDermid and Margi Blunden



Cromer (James Stark 1837)

[The paintings featured here are not necessarily from Barbara's talk. They are from the Norfolk Museums Service's website: <https://www.museumscollections.norfolk.gov.uk/> – Newsletter Subeditor]



Forthcoming Meetings

All meetings at 2:00pm unless otherwise stated

- 15th December** Christmas Party. STARTS 1:00pm.
- 19th 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.
- 16th February** **The History of Cromer Pier**. A talk by Sean Garrett, the Pier's General Manager. Cromer Pier won the Pier of the Year 2024 award.
- 16th March** **To France and beyond: my life in France, inspiration and finding the time**. A talk by Gillian Harvey, author and freelance writer.

QUIZ

Mixed Bag

1. Which King of England changed the history of government with The Magna Carta?
2. Who was the last King of England to die in Battle?
3. Which King of England was the first to own and drive a car?
4. Where in England are these places? a) Ogle b) Thornton-le-Beans c) Four Gotes
5. Where in King's Lynn is there a Jewish Cemetery?
6. Name the capital of Bolivia
7. What is the musical genre of the 1990s exemplified by Blur, Oasis and Pulp?
8. In what ship did Sir Francis Drake circumnavigate the Globe?
9. What is the name of the main disease which affects the Potato crop?
10. Name the Wizard of Arthurian legend
11. What is the Latin name for King?
12. In which city is the sporting venue of Murrayfield?
13. In which sporting event would you perform a Fosbury Flop?
14. Which London Hospital has the copyright to the book Peter Pan?
15. Which bird 'comes in April, sings his song in May and goes away in July'?



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 12th JANUARY 2026. 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 and Crossword

Quiz Answers

1. King John
2. Richard 111
3. Edward V11
4. a) Whalton, Northumberland b) Near Northallerton, North Yorkshire c) In Cambridgeshire, between Long Sutton and Wisbech
5. Millfleet
6. La Paz
7. BritPop
8. Golden Hind
9. Blight
10. Merlin
11. Rex
12. Edinburgh
13. High Jump
14. Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital
15. The Cuckoo

Crossword Solution

1	S	T	A	L	A	G	M	I	T	E			6	S	N	I	P	8
	E		C		R		E		H						I		R	
9	T	I	T	L	E	P	A	G	E	S			10	A	C	R	E	
	O		I		I		D		S			11	C		K		T	
12	F	R	O	W	N	S			13	A	N	O	R	A	N	G	E	
	F		N		T			14	B		O		I		A		E	
				15	T	H	R	E	E	W	I	S	E	M	E	N		
16		17	F		D		E		C		M		P		E		S	
18	A	L	O	N	G	W	A	Y	A	W	A	Y						
	I		M		O		M		N		N		19	T		20	O	
21	R	E	I	N	D	E	E	R		22	A	D	V	E	R	B		
	R		N		S		B		23	U		E		A		J		
24	I	M	A	M		25	B	L	A	N	K	V	E	R	S	E		
	D		T				U		I		V		U		C			
26	E	Y	E	S		27	M	E	L	T	I	N	G	P	O	T		

