

Newsletter
March 2026

Voewood House, which the Art Appreciation group visited in February, sported many amazing decorative features, including this sofa inspired by Salvador Dali's famous Mae West Lips Sofa. You can read a full report on the visit inside this Newsletter.



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

FROM OUR CHAIR

Do you know the saying "March comes in like a Lion and goes out like a Lamb"? It means that the weather is stormy and cold at the beginning of the month, but warmer at the end of the month.

Mind you when I googled 'March comes in like a Lion' this is what I got: "*March Comes In like a Lion* is an anime television series animated by Shaft, adapted from the manga series of the same name written and illustrated by Chica Umino. It features the life of Rei Kiriya, an introvert and professional shogi player, who gradually develops both his play and his relationship with others."

Well, you learn something new every day!

Mentioning 'learning': have you joined any new groups recently, or even joined your first group? When I came to my first meeting of u3a I recognised about five people who I had met at other activities. After two or three years of only attending the monthly meetings I recognised eight people, the five I previously knew plus three who belonged to the u3a committee and gave reports at each meeting.

It was not until I joined a group that I began to make friends and to know many more people. Being in a group gives you time to chat and to form friendships. It enables meeting up at other times, being introduced to further people and expanding the group of people that you know.

So, if you haven't joined a group in a while, do have a look at the Spring 2026 Members Handbook that you have been sent by email. In it you will find information about all the groups available and a chance to make new friends and develop your relationship with others!

Best wishes,

Hilary Joint Chair

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
Deputy Treasurer (co-opted)	Amanda Peacock	deptreasurer@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	Ann McKimm	speakers@hunstantonu3a.org
Groups Co-ordinator	Jacquie Yaxley	groups@hunstantonu3a.org
IT	Norman Mitchell	it@hunstantonu3a.org
Newsletter Editor (co-opted)	David LeMoir	newsletter@hunstantonu3a.org
Long-Standing Member (co-opted)	Sylvia Pratt	

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.

What Have I Missed?

All members can attend our Monthly Meetings which are usually held on the third Monday of each month at 2pm in Hunstanton Community Centre.

But what if for some reason you cannot attend? How will you know what happened?

Our excellent Secretary Virginia makes notes on what has occurred at these monthly meetings and wonderful Ian (Webmaster / Joint Chair) has put them on the website for all to see.

So, go on to our website <https://hunstanton.u3asite.uk>, click on “Events” and then find “What have I missed? Meeting Minutes”. Then you will see what you have missed!

Hilary Farrell

Committee News

Deputy Treasurer

At a recent committee meeting Ian introduced Amanda Peacock to the committee members as a volunteer replacement Treasurer in October when Pat retires.

Amanda explained that she is a qualified accountant and has been working with Charities for many years. She retired two years ago from March in Cambridgeshire, and became a member of Downham Market u3a prior to moving to Heacham. She has been Co-opted as Deputy-Treasurer to the committee till October.

Newsletter Editor

Sylvia has had to retire due to failing health, and David LeMoir has been Co-opted to the committee as her replacement. Welcome, David.

Our sincere thanks go out to Sylvia who, being a founder member of Hunstanton u3a, started the newsletter somewhere near the beginning, and has done it ever since. David started to help her when he was Chair, in 2015/6, but (we believe) she did it on her own for the previous 25 years.

During the Covid crisis, Sylvia decided to expand the Newsletter in order to help members stay in touch, and we owe her a great debt of gratitude for that. It has remained in its expanded form ever since.

Ian Joint Chair

Editorial!!

This is the first Newsletter ‘under new management’. Hopefully, with your help, it will remain the monthly source of information and entertainment that Sylvia made it.

A few points. Firstly, I have taken over the email address newsletter@hunstantonu3a.org from Sylvia. If you have been in email contact with her through that address, you need to go to your contacts list and change the contact name to mine. Otherwise, you will receive emails from me that say that they come from Sylvia!

Secondly, we need more contributions from you, our members. You could tell everyone what you like about our u3a, what you have done in the groups to which you belong, or what you do outside the u3a. I’m sure you can think of what to say. And we need quizzes. In the past, when none had been received from members, Sylvia used to put one together herself. Please don’t leave that task to me.

Just remember – as with all other aspects of our u3a, you are not a customer, you are a member. Without members volunteering and making contributions to our activities, we will stagnate... and the Newsletter will be very thin!

David

FROM OUR GROUPS

Art Appreciation

Voewood House



We had a cold and damp day for our visit to the fabulous Voewood house. The knowledgeable Andrew Taylor, who was going to conduct our tour, first introduced us to his friend and colleague Simon Finch – the owner of Voewood. Simon told us a little about the history of the place, how he came to buy it, and his vision for it. Then Andrew gave us more information about the history and design as we walked around the gardens and the ground floor. Designed by the visionary architect Edward Prior and completed in 1905 for the Reverend Percy Robert Lloyd. This Arts & Crafts house has an unusual butterfly plan. The three-storey central portion of the house is flanked by diagonal two-storey wings giving optimum light to the main rooms.

While the architecture of the house and gardens is a fine example of Arts & Crafts, the interior decor and contents are anything but! When Simon bought the property in 1998,

it had been used as various schools and care homes – “institutionalized” for nearly 100 years. So, he began the process of stripping it out and furnishing it in his own eclectic style. The effect now is a delightful mixture of styles. Much '60s and '70s kitsch, with many pop-art prints and posters. Also, some older pieces such as photos of Queen Victoria’s children in the billiard room. A large “Last Supper” in the dining room. A Bauhaus chair and a lips sofa. In the main hall is a large Arts and Crafts tiled fireplace, a minstrel’s gallery and, before you think it’s going a bit traditional, a large pink neon sign on the wall.



After Andrew’s fascinating tour of the ground floor rooms, we had plenty of time to explore the many bedrooms and bathrooms on the upper floors, all unique and full of quirky artefacts. I also had a look at the 60s style



nightclub in the basement – great place for a party! A brief stroll around the beautiful gardens followed by tea with the owner.

We were lucky to see the house which now mainly serves as a wedding and events venue and is rarely open to the public. Thanks to Andrew for making it such an interesting tour, and meeting the owner made it even more memorable.

Martin Shapiro

Flower Arranging group



Happy Easter from the Flower Fairies!

Line Dancing

The u3a line dancing group meets in Heacham on Saturday 10:00 to 12:00 (except for the first Saturday of the month as our venue isn't available then). We have a loyal group of thirteen members who have made such good progress that we no longer consider ourselves a beginners group.

We are a friendly and supportive group who have fun while dancing.

We have limited space and are currently full. We have therefore contacted those on the waiting list to update them and to suggest some potential alternative groups for them to consider.



The photograph was taken when we met just before Christmas and features most of our members.

Sally Dearden

Arty-facts

John Constable and the Development of European Impressionism

Notes on a talk by Anne Roberts.

The current exhibition of Constable and Turner at Tate Britain that I went to yesterday is a giant of an exhibition. It showcases this country's two most well-known artists magnificently. Seeing their works in the same place offered me fresh insights into two men who were born a year apart and were seen very often as rivals in the art world.



John Constable

On the train home it wasn't Turner I kept thinking about but Constable; his work was so familiar to me so why this disturbance in my mind? Perhaps it was too familiar? Had the way *The Hay Wain* been reproduced on chocolate boxes and cheap framed copies destroyed something for me? I just could not find any objectivity in my thoughts with regard to his paintings I had just seen.

Today Anne Roberts, who spoke to our group about Constable and his influence on other artists, helped me to solve my dilemma.

At the time when Constable was becoming an artist (largely self-taught) the accepted subjects to paint were of classical scenes. Anne showed us a painting by William Etty titled *The Triumph of Cleopatra*. It shows a huge group of people in various states of undress celebrating Cleopatra's arrival by boat to meet Mark Anthony. The popularity of history paintings like this was a very far cry from what Constable started to paint. Here was 'the handsome miller' (as he was known locally in the Vale of Dedham in Suffolk) describing in oils the landscape he loved.

Which other artist was doing this? The answer was none, and so he stood out as a revolutionary. What is more he very often painted outside, capturing the landscape and the people working in the fields or managing barges on the river.

So there was nothing constructed out of the past or his imagination, no sentimental images to sway our emotions; no, this was rural life as it was lived at the time.

As Anne explained how this quiet, radical artist developed his ideas separate from a world of traditional, and one could almost say entrenched art, I started to make a connection as to how extraordinary Constable's work is.

His new approach, though, was not quickly accepted. Although the Royal Academy displayed his painting *The Hay Wain* in 1821, no one showed any interest in it. However, it was a different story over the Channel. In 1824 it was shown in the Paris Salon and it was so well appreciated that the French king, Charles the Tenth, awarded Constable a gold medal. It was also moved to the Louvre where the public could see it.

This event was significant not only for the artist but also for the development of painting.

Anne explained that, as a result of many French artists seeing Constable's painting, a group of them decided to move to Barbizon, a rural village in the Seine et Marne department in north central France, and paint en plein air.



The Mill Stream by John Constable

For the French artist, classical subjects were for the rich and powerful while painting out of doors was real.

Corot, Rousseau, Daubigny, Diaz de la Pena and Francois Millet were all members of the Barbizon Group at some time or another.

This movement then led ultimately to something else – Impressionism. There isn't the space here to describe how that happened in detail, but Eugene Boudin encouraged Monet to paint outside and look what happened then!

When French artists fled the Franco Prussian War in 1870 and came to London, then all kinds of things developed in the art world – Monet painted the Thames and the Houses of Parliament; Pissarro painted *Lordship Lane Station* having certainly seen Turner's *Rain Steam Speed*.

They held their first Impressionist exhibition when they returned to Paris where it was noticed that Monet's and Pissarro's technique had changed – they had started to split their brushstrokes to create a different effect. Impressionism was truly on its way!

I was bowled over at this link back to Constable and left Anne's talk enlightened and delighted by it. She had shifted something huge for me in my understanding of art.

This is what can happen in our Arty-facts group! We do have a waiting list, it is true, but if you fancy putting your name down it will be worth the wait.

Margi Blunden

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? QUIZ ?
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No quiz this month!

This is where you can be particularly helpful to your fellow u3a members. Just put together a quiz, of up to around twenty questions, on any topic of your choosing. Or simply on General Knowledge. Picture quizzes are also welcome.

Forthcoming Meetings

All meetings at 2:00pm

16th March

To France and Beyond, a talk by Gillian Harvey, author and freelance writer.

Gillian shares insights from her fifteen years in rural France, her author journey and the inspiration for her thirteen published novels.

20th April

My Life in Brass, a talk by Kevin Mackie, taking us on a journey from first forays into music up to becoming one of the most accomplished euphonium players in the Midlands. He will bring instruments with him and share some of his music with us.

18th May

Songs of Norfolk performed by Chanter's Jigge. Songs, ayres, jigs and jollies from around Europe and across the centuries, played and sung with ancient, traditional and modern instruments.

FROM OUR (NEW!) 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 13th APRIL 2026. Please send them to David at newsletter@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. No PDFs please.

Thank You to.....

My thanks to all who have contributed to this month's newsletter.