

August 2026

# Hunstanton u3a Magazine

learn, laugh, live

## Keeping our members in touch



*A great photograph  
from Jacquie, our  
Groups Coordinator  
(but not for much  
longer!), taken on a  
trip to Manitoba.*

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

## From our Chair

Our magazine has articles about scams this month. I fell for a Scam a couple of years ago when I received emails telling me that Yahoo would be closing my account if I did not update my details. Unfortunately, I clicked on the link and a scammer was able to take over my personal emails. The scammers emailed all my contacts telling them I was stuck abroad and needed money urgently, and they deleted all my emails and contacts from my account. It was a difficult job recovering from this, both mentally and electronically. But it taught me to beware.

So, two weeks ago when I received an email telling me that my direct debit for my TV licence had failed and to click the link to sort this out, I immediately put the email into the Spam box. The following week I got a similar email, so into the Spam box it went and then this week I got my third email saying that I may be liable for prosecution and leading me to a website. But I know that the TV licence is obtained from a government website with gov.uk in the address. So once again the email goes into the Spam box. But just to be sure, I checked my bank, and the direct debit had gone through with no problems. Have you had one of these scam TV licence emails? If so, just ignore it and bin it!! In all I have received five emails from the scammers, each one from a different email address so that my account does not recognise it as a scam.

I hope you have a scam-free summer!

Best wishes

**Hilary**

# From our Committee

## Our Committee Members

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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.

Please note that, whenever a Committee member changes, the email address (and all past and future email correspondence) for their post goes to their replacement. This means that you need to change the entry in **your** email app's address book (or contacts list), otherwise the old name will show up on all future email correspondence!

## Speaker News

Hello everyone. Just a note to remind you of the speakers booked for the rest of this year.

It looks like a really interesting series of talks, and begins on September 21st with Amanda Sutherland who will be speaking on her "Creative Journey" in fashion. Her details state that she has inspired 100s of groups over the last 15 years with her talks on fashion and design and running a creative accessories empire. She will bring samples of her work with her.

She has assisted on many TV, Theatre and film productions working in the costume industry. She describes it as her "Dream job" and anyone who loves fashion and creative work will love it. Come and be inspired...

On November 16th Jim Stebbings returns to us to talk about "The Sentiments of Christmas", after he joined us last year to talk about the "History of Pantomime", and we look forward to seeing him again to help us celebrate the Christmas season.

The rest of the meetings will see celebrations of some kind to look forward to, and Verity will tell you all about them in due course.

I have nearly finished the bookings for next year's meetings and will fill you in nearer the time. I am trying to make them as varied as possible and to suit all tastes but, if you have any ideas, do let me know about them. Thank you to all those members who have already sent me Speaker information – it has made my job much easier. Have a lovely Summer and see you all in September,

**Ann** Speakers Secretary

## July 2026 Members' Meeting

### My Amazing journey to Antarctica

David Pinion's vivid account of his 33-day trip to the other side of the globe lived up to expectations promised in the title. First we began to appreciate, through clever comparison maps and illustrations, the immensity of the region. Next we learned how the potentially dangerous weather could, and did, alter the itinerary. The route was created to satisfy the dual interests of the physical sciences together with the history of the courageous early twentieth century explorers.

High-quality photographs and videos introduced us to a wide range of natural life forms – penguins of course, plus the beauty of seabirds and dramatic appearance of whales. The ice-strengthened ship took the seafarers through breathtaking waves captured by a camera on the bridge.

Passengers took some glacier trips using the on-board helicopters. History came to life with a visit to captain Scott's hut on Ross island. We chuckled to see a Colman's Mustard tin on a shelf, alongside the never changing Lyle's Golden Syrup. This engaging narrative was delivered to a highly attentive audience and Ann McKimm, speaker secretary, thanked David warmly.



## From our Groups

### Art Appreciation

#### A Visit to John Clare's Cottage

On Monday 6 July nineteen members of the Art Appreciation group visited John Clare's cottage. This is situated in the village of Helpston just northeast of Peterborough. We went by shared cars.

The village street contains many old houses, barns and a pub built of the local Barnack stone, but the cottage is whitewashed with a thatched roof. We entered by a side gate and assembled in the rear courtyard which contains a statue of John Clare as a young man wearing a high collared topcoat and boots. Around the back of the coat are depicted many of the birds and animals that he loved and wrote about. He is also holding a No Entry sign which reminds one of how much he resented the land enclosures that were taking place as he grew up.

At the back of the courtyard is a recently constructed café where we were welcomed with coffee and cakes.



The cottage is owned by the John Clare society and run by volunteers. Our visit had been arranged through them.

After our coffee we were each given an audio guide and allowed to explore the cottage as we wished. The guide was excellent and described the life of John Clare and the interior layout of the cottage, and included readings of some of his poems which I especially enjoyed.

The cottage is very simple with thick whitewashed walls. One very large fireplace in the living room. In the kitchen were some typical cooking vessels and models of the kinds of simple local foods that they would have eaten. I could not get up the steep winding stairs, but an audio-visual display showing the simple bedrooms was provided in the large dovecote outside.

John Clare was born in this cottage on 13 July 1793 in a heatwave. His twin sister died after a few weeks. John's parents were poor farm

labourers and rented the cottage which they shared with another family so it must have been very busy and crowded. All cooking was done on an open Fire. Water had to be carried from a well.

Both John's parents were illiterate, but they were aware that he was a bit different and they paid for him to go to a local school at the church, where he learned to read and write. All writing was done with chalk on a slate as paper was very expensive. He was also taught by the vicar who lent him books. As a youth he loved wandering the local countryside and observing the animals and birds which feature in many of his poems. He had to work from an early age. First as a pot boy at the Blue Bell pub, then as a gardener at Burghley house. He enlisted with the militia and worked as a lime burner. In 1818 he had to accept parish relief as he had no money.

He was only five foot tall and malnourished, so he was never strong. He had bought himself a copy of James Thomson's poems *The Seasons* and began to write his own poems which he offered to a local bookseller who then passed them to a publisher John Taylor, and he produced them in 1820 as *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenes*. They were highly praised, and a second book *The Village Minstrel, and other poems* was published. He was acclaimed as a peasant poet and visited London where he got to know Charles Lamb.

He married Martha Turner and they lived at first in the cottage with his parents. They had many children. Clare's admirers raised an annuity for him, but it was not enough to support a family.

His further books of poems did not sell well, and he worked as a field labourer, but his health deteriorated and he became delusional. He was placed in a private asylum at Epping but he escaped in 1841 and walked the eighty miles back to Northborough, sleeping in hedges and eating grass. However, he was then certified insane and spent the last 23 years of his life at the asylum in Northampton where he continued to write poetry. He is buried in Helpston churchyard

Our visit concluded with a very pleasant lunch of homemade pea soup, sandwiches and cake. Some members walked to the church, but I remained to enjoy the flowers in the garden and think about John Clare's life. I was very moved by his poem *I Am*:

I am – yet what I am none cares or knows;  
My friends forsake me like a memory lost:  
I am the self-consumer of my woes –  
They rise and vanish in oblivious host,  
Like shadows in love's frenzied stifled throes  
And yet I am – and live like vapours tossed

Into the nothingness of scorn and noise,  
Into the living sea of waking dreams,  
Where there is neither sense of life nor joys,  
But the vast shipwreck of my life's esteems;  
And e'en the dearest that I loved the best  
Are strange – nay rather stranger than the rest.

I long for scenes where man has never trod  
A place where woman never smiled or wept  
There to abide with my Creator, God,  
And sleep as I in childhood sweetly slept,  
Untroubling and untroubled where I lie  
The grass below – above the vaulted sky.

I must thank Jill and Sue for organising this memorable visit.

**Marian Rowe**

[The poem appears in various sources, with some differences to the words and punctuation. I have tried to adhere closely to Marian's own rendition – Editor]

## A Note for Your Diary

Dersingham Flower Festival 2026 is being held from Thursday 17th to Sunday 20th September. The theme is 'A walk through the Alphabet'.

Our very own u3a Flower Arranging group, i.e. the Flower Fairies, will be taking part creating three exhibits. G for garden, I for ice and O for orange. Please come along and see what we and all the other flower ladies have achieved. There will be refreshments on offer too.

Many weeks of planning and hard work go into these festivals, so it would be great to have your support.

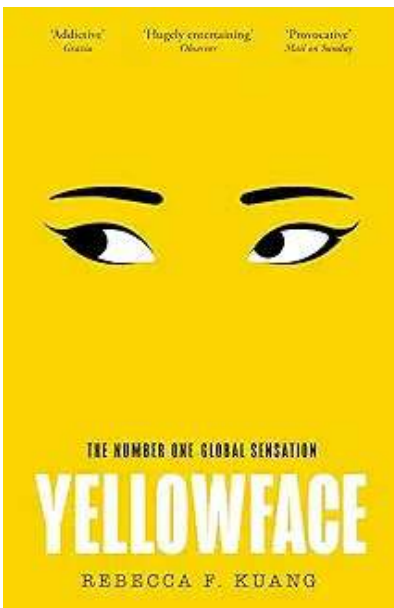
**Sandra Loader**



## Book Reviews

### Book group 1

**Yellowface** by **R.F.Kuang**



A satirical examination of the world of publishing in America. Rebecca has written a superb examination of the attempt by June Hayward to take over and re-draft *The Last Front*, which was in the process of being written by Athena Liu – a Chinese American author who is an industry darling.

Rebecca has brilliantly described the internecine fighting that erupts after June gets the work published and is anticipating a massive financial gain, via the publisher that has taken the book on board.

As the promoted book gets yet more publicity an editorial assistant, Candice Lee, starts to accuse June of stealing Athena's work. Candice is then sacked, but that does not stop her from mounting a campaign of hate against June.

June carries on attending promotional events, but begins to see the ghost of Athena in the audience and begins to lose control of the narrative.

The plot twists and the eventual taking down of June promotes a concentrated view of the 'war' that breaks out in the publishing industry. Eventually Candice, having relentlessly pursued June through social media, meets her and physically attacks her, and June is hospitalised.

The book ends with June writing her own version of the events in an attempt to portray Candice as a cyber bully. A cracking read, with a great ending.

**Lesley Trebbick**

### Book group 2

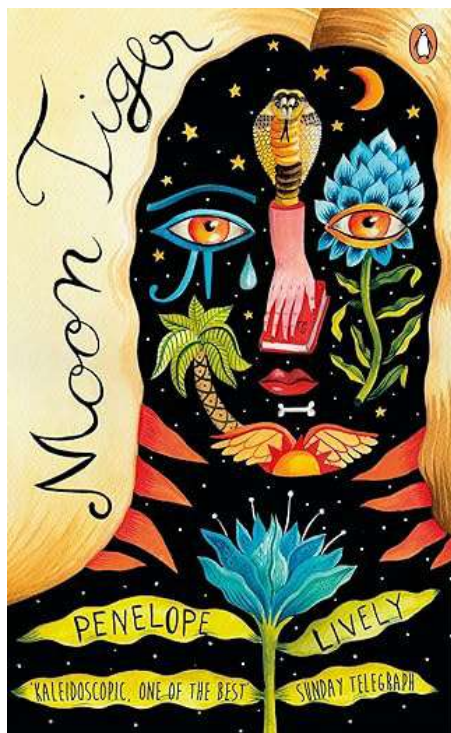
**Moon Tiger** by **Penelope Lively** (first published 1987)

Can you imagine, at the end of your life, lying in a hospital bed, reviewing and mentally writing a book of your history – your own history – as your contribution to the wider idea of the 'history of the world'?

Penelope Lively managed this, in fiction, back in 1987. Claudia Hampton tells her nurse: *'I'm writing a history of the world' she says. And the hands of the nurse are arrested for a moment; she looks down at this old woman, this ill old woman. 'Well, my goodness' the nurse says. 'That's quite a thing to be doing, isn't it?' And then she becomes busy again, she heaves and tucks and smooths – 'Upsy a bit, dear, that's a good girl – then we'll get you a cup of tea.'*

So opens the first paragraph introducing us to the indomitable, difficult, irascible Claudia who then proceeds, not in any linear way, to relive and relate the story of her life, her failed love, her ambivalence to her brother with whom she is in lifelong competition, her career and her special relationship with Egypt.

The 'Moon Tiger' is a double coil used against mosquitoes, which as it burns coils itself around the ash and is the metaphor for Claudia's life review.



I particularly mention the publishing date of 1987. This date is relevant to our readership in u3a because most of us straddle the twentieth century which includes the experiences of our parents up to and including their wartime memories. This unites us 'baby boomers' in those shared snippets and inevitably colour our own views.

Heaven forbid that we are forced to lie in bed as Claudia did at the end of our lives. But we can all lie in bed and relive our experiences. And all our experiences contribute to the general 'History of the World' however small.

In particular, we can live in her shoes as she fights her brother to discover fossils on a cliff as children, she dissects her family relationships and her failed marriage, and above all she takes us through her wartime work as a war correspondent in Egypt and the Western Desert with her only true love, Tom Southern, after whose death returns to her in diary form at the end of her life.

Lively's descriptions of colonial Egypt and the Western Desert in wartime are painfully accurate – especially if you have ever heard about them from a soldier from that time. Other writers have also left us their impressions – the poets Vernon Scannell and Keith Douglas to name but two. Lively's writing is exquisite, she puts you into the experience.

As a group, we would highly recommend reading or re-reading this book. Of the lower scores we awarded, there were criticisms of the 'non-linear' or random sections as the book progressed, and the wartime experiences of Claudia that did not take in the wider evils of World War 2 such as the holocaust.

Largely, we awarded scores of 8 or 9 – quite an achievement in the group.

**Martin Chown**

## Crime Book group

**The Fells** by Cath Staincliffe 3/5 \*

### Synopsis

Yorkshire Dales, Summer 1997. Vicky Mott slips out the door of her remote cottage, and into the pale dawn light. She scrawls a note for her friends: "Gone to see the sunrise. V xxx". That's the last anyone ever hears from twenty-year-old music lover Vicky. Another victim of the Fellside Strangler?

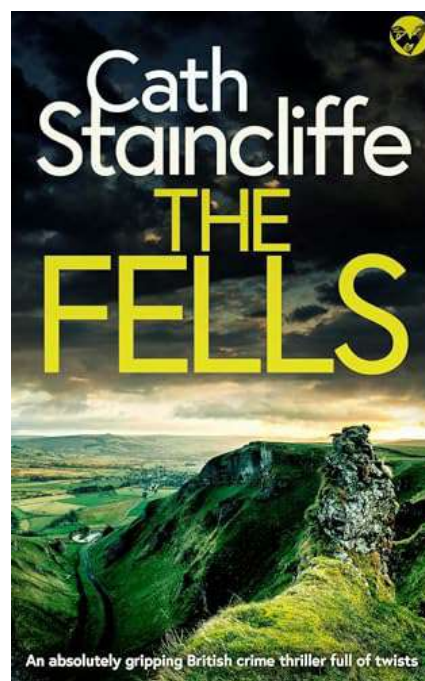
That would make Vicky the fourth young woman to lose her life this summer. Snatched by a mysterious killer who stalks the fells . . . But Vicky's body is never found.

2019. A skeleton is discovered in a twisty network of caves beneath the fells. Detectives Leo Donovan and Shan Young think they can finally give Elizabeth, Vicky's mother, the closure she so desperately wants after twenty long years of questions and anguish. But the deeper they dig into the past, the less certain they become. And nothing can prepare them for the shocking truth . . .

### Review

Most of us enjoyed the book up to a point. Cath's brilliant descriptions of the scenery of the Yorkshire Fells and her obvious love of the area and the wildlife really shone through. The way the book skipped back and forth from the story in 1997 up to the current investigation in 2019 was very well written from the points of view of all the characters, even to the point of being emotional in parts.

However, as a police procedural cold-case novel it failed to hit the mark. The two detectives Donovan and Young appeared to be working very much in isolation on the case and the frequent glimpses into Young's pregnancy and Donovan's issues with his son did nothing to enhance the story. Leaving aside the scenery and wildlife the book could have been halved. The book itself was slow and ponderous with very little tension. The



plot had no real depth and it was pretty obvious from about a quarter of a way through how and why Vicky had met her death and who'd dunnit!

The ending did leave some of us wondering what Elizabeth did next and what was the link between Leo's son and the pub Manager. It wasn't really a cliffhanger, more a "buy my next book and find out". Not sure any of us will.

**Jacquie Yaxley**

## From our Members

### John Clare Revealed – a detective story

When I was a child a large, unsigned oil portrait of John Clare, framed in a 19th century frame, hung in our living room in Hong Kong where I grew up. His face was part of my childhood and his poems familiar to me through my father whose association with Clare went back to his childhood in the early 1900s.

The portrait is actually a copy of the one that hangs in the National Portrait Gallery. Where my father got it from I don't know, but he had it long before I was born. I failed to ask about its origins as a child and, by the time I was 27, my father had died and so all opportunity was lost.

It was many years later that I had the time to go through some of the remainder of my father's books and papers, and I came across the first edition of *John Clare Poems Chiefly from Manuscript* edited by my father and published by Richard Cobden-Sanderson in 1920.

My curiosity was piqued by the title.

I then came across a booklet entitled *John Clare: beginner's luck* by Edmund Blunden published 1971 and the story began to unravel.

My father, whilst still at school before WW1, acquired 'Oxford Library of Prose and Poetry' edited by Arthur Symons and published in 1908, and this included a selection of Clare's poems. In the foreword Symons states that he had not been able to trace the manuscripts of Clare's asylum poems hence they were not in the selection.

The idea that these 'lost' poems were out there somewhere stayed with my father all through the trenches.

After the war he became a student at Oxford and in the Bodleian Library he found a booklet *Northamptonshire Botanologia* by G.C. Druce. This was about Clare and his flower knowledge including

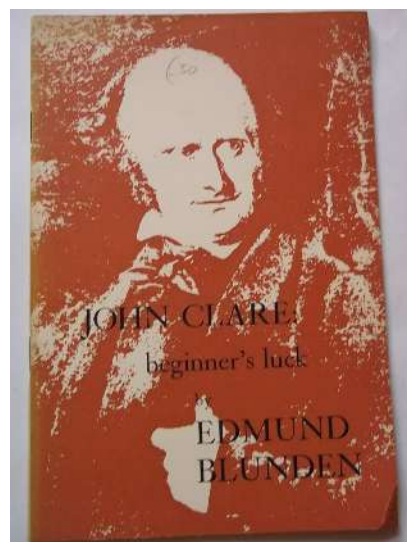
quotations from manuscripts that Druce cited as being at Peterborough Natural History Museum.

What next? The desire to find these asylum poems urged my father onwards and by some great good luck he discovered that Dr. Druce was living in Oxford, now a very old man. Somehow an invitation to tea was arranged which resulted in a letter of introduction to the curator, Mr Bodger, of the Peterborough Museum and also the information that Dr. Druce, in his youth, had actually seen Clare!

I am assuming that this must have been in the days when Clare used to walk into the centre of Northampton from the asylum and sit on the stone seat outside All Saints Church.

So during the Easter vacation in 1920 my father, his then wife Mary and his friend Alan Porter travelled to Peterborough only to find it was Horse Fair week and accommodation was very scarce. However, they found a small guest house but Alan had to sleep in the bath – or so the story goes!

Mr Bodger seemed surprised to see these three young people, but the introduction from Dr Druce did the trick and they entered his room in the Museum. In the corner was a large cupboard. A key



The only known photograph of John Clare, from the Art Appreciation group's visit to the John Clare Cottage

was produced. Inside there were masses of papers – the remains of an exhibition of 1893. All was disorder!

They found, amongst catalogues and drafts in prose and verse, two bound folios that Clare had prepared for the press in 1832: a thick manuscript book of poems long and short. Foraging about, they found drafts of Clare's impressions of people and occasions in London – Coleridge, Hazlitt, De Quincey, Lamb and others.

Then looking further the cupboard yielded "the most curious series of short, unadorned, intense poems in English, written when Clare's mind was beginning to dwell on loneliness and suffering – and resistance."

They had found the missing manuscripts Arthur Symonds had referred to!

The next three weeks were spent hand-copying the manuscripts.

Back in Oxford they wrote articles for the *London Mercury*, the *Athenaeum*, *Today* magazine – the editors were eager to know all about their discovery. The publisher Richard Cobden-Sanderson offered to publish a book, and so it was that in late 1920 *John Clare Poems Chiefly from Manuscript* hit the bookshops and made available to the world those poems we now so value.

In the concluding section of *Beginner's Luck* my father wrote:

*What was our greatest capture? It must be left to others, but when I was left to myself as the practical man in continuing the quest, I think I found a good candidate, amongst Clare's asylum poems. We had printed 'A Vision', ....and it has been regarded by the poet Siegfried Sassoon, a most grateful as well as discriminating reader of others' poems, as a true poem:*

*I lost the love of heaven above,  
I spurned the lust of earth below,  
I felt the sweets of fancied love,  
And hell itself my only foe.*

*I lost earth's joys, but felt the glow  
Of heaven's flame abound in me,  
Till loveliness and I did grow  
The bard of immortality.*

*I loved but woman fell away,  
I hid me from her faded fame,  
I snatch'd the sun's eternal ray  
And wrote till earth was but a name.*

*In every language upon earth,  
On every shore, o'er every sea  
I gave my name immortal birth  
And kept my spirit with the free.*

**Margi Blunden**

## **Flash Fiction 1**

### **Iris Dell**

I live next door to Iris Dell. She's nothing like her name; she's a feisty fighter. She's a campaigner, a collector of newspapers, the proprietor of a cat hotel, she waits for last minute reductions at the supermarket and brings them home in her trolley.

*She has a secret...*

I followed her the other night, as she left the house in disguise. She wore high heels; I caught a glimpse of stockings and a fine grey coat. Around the corner she stepped into a black Mercedes. I saw it pull into the Holiday Inn where one suitcase was lifted from the boot. Good old Iris Dell, I thought.

## Septimus Solo

[*Septimus Solo is the nom de plume of a Hunstanton u3a member - Ed.*]

## HDFA Final Project Completed

*Editor's note: Ann McKimm sent me the press release below.*

The HDFA is happy to announce that the last panel of ceramic tiles painted by local people, children and holiday visitors is now up on the seafront. This is the last project from the Hunstanton and District Festival of Arts who finished last December after their grant had been removed by Kings Lynn Borough Council.

The HDFA had been serving Hunstanton since 1942, when it was formed during the war years to keep Art alive in Hunstanton and its surrounding areas. It started with a concert and later formed the local Drama Festival of one act plays, a Community Pantomime Robin Hood (Norfolk Style) in 2010, many art exhibitions and the Hunstanton Music Festival (which is still running).

The Ceramic tile project was thought up in 2012 by Artist Kate Dunbar, who was then a member of the Committee, and began with workshops in local primary schools with children painting their thoughts about Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee. Many colourful and imaginative designs appeared, including Corgis on the beach and royal jewelry. All were signed by their creators. There are nine panels in all, each containing ninety tiles.

Later designs included Norfolk Wildlife panels containing birds and animals found in the area and these were painted by local residents and visitors. Next came wildflowers and, later, sea life and local memories. There was also an impressive mural panel of a ship at sea designed by Smithdon High School students. Most of the tiles are signed by their designers and will be up on the sea wall for many generations to come and enjoy.

You can find them down on the Seafront on the North prom next to the road down to the ice cream kiosk and under the beach huts, and they brighten up a what was once a very drab wall.

We, the HDFA, thank everyone who took part in this scheme and hope they will remind everyone of some very happy times painting tiles by the sea in beautiful Hunstanton.

Ann McKimm Last Secretary of the HDFA.

*Ann also commented to your editor:*

"The last panel went up this month and many of the u3a members would have taken part in it over the years, or their grandchildren will have. The Men's Shed put most of the tiles up on the wall and deserve a thankyou."

## "I didn't think they started that young!"

My granddaughter and her partner were travelling on the tube across London listening intently to an announcement warning of thieves and pick pockets operating in the stations and on the trains.

Announcement finished, they both looked down at their two-year-old daughter in her pushchair, to find her cuddling a bottle of wine. Apparently, Mabel, who currently as a fascination for zips, found the temptation of a fellow passenger's zipped up shopping bag all too much. She busied herself opening the zip and helped herself to the contents!

Fortunately, the owner of the bag had a sense of humour and laughingly declared "Well I never! I know I need to be vigilant, but I really didn't think they started that young."

Eventually, Mabel reluctantly gave up her bounty and all ended well.

## Sandra Loader



## Nursing Memories

I always wanted to be a nurse ...and I became one.

My first experience was as a Red Cross volunteer, working at the weekends on a children's ward. Of course I got all the menial jobs to do, but I was not discouraged. I was hooked .

At 18, I became a student nurse at the Royal London Hospital, a famous hospital with an excellent reputation. Edith Cavell and Dr Barnardo trained there, and the Elephant man lived there for a while. It is situated in the East End, in Jack the Ripper territory.

My, nursing has changed – no university course then; we learned our skills at the bedside. Theory was taught at the School of Nursing. Initial induction was six weeks at PTS where we learned the ropes and had to be in by 10pm. Then we were allocated wards, wearing our outdated uniform – starched crossover pinny, frilly cap, long dress – not practical but we were proud wearing it. The work was hard physically and mentally. No Electric mattresses, beds or lifting gear – all lifting was done by us manually.



*Practical Teaching of Student Nurses in the Wards.  
Learning to Record Blood Pressure*



For three years, we worked shifts on the wards and various departments.

On my first ward, to my surprise, the Sister said prayers after breakfast with us on our knees in the centre of the ward... Not a common practice!

We all did a stint in A&E – we called it the Receiving Room. We saw and helped so many, often with strange complaints and often terrible injuries. There were no mandatory crash helmets or seat belts then. Also, the Krays were active in the sixties so injuries from violent crime were fairly common. On a fairly regular basis, heroin addicts and meths drinkers also came through our doors for help.

A quite different placement, much calmer was the Private Block. People came from all over the country to have treatment at the London. Their accommodation was rather more palatial than the usual. We met some fascinating people there.

I was very nervous before starting in Theatres, but once I knew the routine I enjoyed it. But I missed the interaction with the patients who were of course asleep!

We weren't always working. We enjoyed the delights of all London had to offer. Hops at all the colleges and sometimes – to our delight – free Theatre tickets.

Three years flew by. I passed my exams and could add SRN after my name with all the responsibility that entailed.

I married, had children, and worked in various hospitals. When we moved to Kings Lynn I worked at the old hospital and the present QE. It certainly has seen better days.

I also worked at Park House at Sandringham, when it was a hotel for the disabled, and Valentine Court Addenbrookes convalescence home – both now defunct, more's the pity.

I did another spell of volunteering with Tapping House in their early days, at a bungalow in Snettisham. The patients came there for a day out having treatments, advice, beauty treatments, some company with others in similar circumstances, and a



wonderful lunch. Of course their carers had a day off too to unwind. My, the organisation has gone from strength to strength and long may it do so.

I retired in my early sixties, ready to put the feet up.

Nursing seems so different now. Some nurses seem to be almost junior doctors with wide extended practices. However, on the wards, Sisters seem to spend most of their time in offices. Trained nurses are occupied with drug dispensing and computer duties. Supervising treatments, and contact with the actual patients and their relatives seem low on their to-do list.

I expect soon we shall see Robot nurses in the near future... However, I'm sure nurses will still make a difference, and we certainly all will need one at some time in our lives.

**Helen Swanson**

## Stoke Bruerne Memories

I recently saw the film *Painted Boats* on the Talking Pictures TV Channel, which was filmed in 1946 and featured the Grand Union Canal, and Stoke Bruerne particularly. The canalside buildings looked incredibly run down and the whole area looked really sad.

By the time we bought a cottage in Stoke Bruerne about 7 miles south of Northampton 25 years later, how everything had changed – the canal was still the main feature of the village, but the Waterways Museum was housed in the mill building, and the canalside pub, cafe and cottages were a real tourist attraction. I applied for a job at the Museum and worked there for 28 years, originally as secretary to the Curator, but obviously the parameters changed over the years!

I think one of the highlights, or maybe lowlights, was when the Blisworth Tunnel was suddenly closed to traffic in the middle of the holiday season, when all the hire boats at either end of the tunnel had to be shipped on trucks back to their bases. You can imagine the chaos that ensued, and the tunnel was closed for five years, reopened in August 1984 by Sir Leslie Young, the Chairman of British Waterways, after a massive rebuild inside. I walked through the tunnel from the Blisworth end to look at the huge machine used to put concrete rings in the middle third to save it. The reopening ceremony was covered by thirteen TV crews from all over the world.



Source: Wikipedia

We were visited by many film and TV companies, and were always very grateful for any free publicity. Before mobile phones, and with only one telephone line, this could be quite a challenge! One winter's day when I was selling tickets, two ladies came in asking a lot of questions: they turned out to be researchers for the Channel 4 programme *Treasure Hunt* which resulted in Anneka Rice visiting us in her helicopter, and lots of extra visitors as a result.

The Duke of Gloucester visited the Museum, as Chairman of the East Midlands Tourist Board I think, and I met the current Emperor of Japan (although he was an Oxford University student at the time), lots of politicians, and I remember an early morning start with the BBC2 Breakfast Show transmitting from the towpath outside, and one of us having to drive to a newsagents in a nearby village to get the morning papers for their review on the programme.

Over the years, obviously there were huge changes, and British Waterways was able to make amazing improvements to the canal network, and it was lovely to watch the canal system come back to life and support so many businesses.

Our main visitors during the summer season were school children; so it was a day out in the country for them, and I am sure many can still remember their visits there. We used to book twelve coaches in each day, as that filled the capacity of the car park – talking to later visitors they were the children who told their parents about their visit to the Museum and their boat ride. I think in our busiest year we had over 120,000 visitors, mainly school bookings. No one, to my knowledge, fell in the canal!

Of course the good times couldn't last, and over the years policies and management changes altered – school visits became much rarer, we were linked up to the National Waterways Museum in Gloucester, prices to the public increased and gradually we felt we were no longer the flagship building for British Waterways and investment declined.

When I nostalgically visited the Canal Museum a couple of years ago, under the auspices of the Canal & River Trust, I was very sad. The Museum is now a café, with a few of the old exhibits still there, but in my early days there we warranted a Curator with expertise; we collected as many of the old waterways documents as we could – when old offices closed down the policy seemed to just burn all the old paperwork and just get rid of everything. How times have changed!

Before the Internet took over the world, we sold the most comprehensive selection of canal related books and guides that we could – we got enquiries and orders from all over the world, and our shop was known as THE place to buy anything canal-related. But it was a really lovely experience to work there for 28 years and I just loved going to work in such an exciting place – although it was an outpost of a large organisation, at times it seemed like the centre of the world.

## **Jilly Hall**

### **Othello by Lord Chamberlain's Men at Holkham**

Shakespeare in the Park! Not everyone's cup of tea. But our beloved playwright has been pulling in the crowds for 400 years so he must be doing something right!

We went to Holkham on 4 August where The Lord Chamberlain's Men gave a staggering performance of Othello to a packed courtyard. As usual, people had brought their picnics – tables and chairs, and wet weather gear which was needed as the heaven's opened just after the play had begun. Short and sharp, the rain ceased.

Othello has been a very controversial play, especially in America. The controversy was, in the nineteenth century, who was to play Othello? A black man. No – a white man blacked up like the Black and White minstrels. A white Desdemona and a black Othello was for many unthinkable.

But because Othello was not a Black African – he was a Moor, Shakespeare brings out all the various prejudices of a mixed-race relationship but balances it all with the characters like an outraged father after the secret marriage, a scheming colleague Iago who was passed over for promotion, and the eventual murder of Desdemona by Othello for perceived adultery, and subsequently Othello's suicide. Shakespeare leaves the viewer or reader to make up his or her mind. The themes are just as relevant today, as Iago gets away with it.

The all-male cast performed as they would have done back in the seventeenth century, and whether you have an ear for Shakespeare's dialogue delivered clearly, or if you, like me, have a hearing impairment, the whole show was completely riveting and if the Lord Chamberlain's Men come again to Holkham next year I will not miss it!

## **Martin Chown**

### **Beat the Scammers Holiday Frauds**

There are two main ways of you falling foul of frauds although it may be too late to do anything about the first one which I have only just found out about.

It's about booking your holiday online. Millions of people book online hoping to get a fantastic deal, but criminals can take advantage of this. They can advertise flights, accommodation and other services which don't exist. You may only become aware you have been a victim of a scam when you arrive at the airport, or even worse arrive at your destination to find no booking has been made. The advertisement you saw could have been a fraudulent advert posted on a genuine website. Images of the holiday may seem authentic, but may have been copied from anywhere on the internet.

For example, criminals will often ask you to complete the booking away from the site and may offer a further discount for doing so. They may ask for payment by direct bank transfer rather than third party payment services, e.g. Paypal, as this makes it harder for you to recover your money. They may even send a confirma-

tion email to convince you that the booking has been made.

To protect yourself, pay by credit card, check your booking is covered by a protection scheme such as ATOL, and research the property before you book by looking to see if they have their own website and be very cautious if the prices are significantly different.

The other way is not so much a scam but is to protect your property while you are away.

Ask someone you trust to keep an eye out and leave them with details of how to contact you while you're away.

Make arrangements for parcels you might get; don't post anything on social media telling everyone you are away, and do not send photos to your family and friends. They can wait to see them when you get back.

### **Latest Scam Alerts from Norfolk Trading Standards:**

Cold Calling Alert – Telephone cold calls regarding spray foam insulation

Scam Alert – Employment scam cold calls

Scam Alert – Emails claiming to be from 'Disney +'

Rogue Trader Alert – Doorstep Cold Caller offering to trim trees

Rogue Trader Alert – Doorstep Cold Caller offering driveway cleaning

Rogue Trader Alert – Doorstep Cold Caller claiming issues with property's roof

### **Sue Hutcheson**

*If you know of any recent scams that our members should be warned about, please email me and I will pass it on to Sue - Ed.*

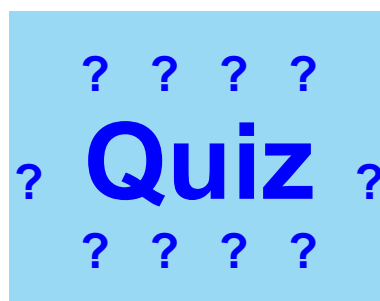
## **Can You Help This Important Research Project?**

Our u3a has been approached by Shannon Edwards, trainee Clinical Psychologist at the University of Leicester. She is conducting doctoral research on something that doesn't get talked about nearly enough: fraud committed not by strangers, but by people we know, such as a partner, a family member, a friend, or even a professional we trusted.

She says:

If this has happened to you, we'd be honoured to listen. It's a one-to-one conversation, up to 75 minutes, on Microsoft Teams. Completely confidential and fully ethically approved by the University. All eligible participants will be given a £20 Love2Shop voucher as a thank you for your time.

What you share may help to shape how psychologists and clinicians actually support people in this situation because, right now, there's very little out there. If you are interested in participating, email Shannon Edwards at [se220@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:se220@leicester.ac.uk) or call 07875229713. Recruitment will end in November 2026.



## **Hidden Rivers**

This is another of Carole Gibbs' clever quizzes. Within the letters of each answer is hidden the name of a British river, sometimes two. So, your task is to answer the questions **and** identify the river(s)!

1. In the Queen's question in Snow White, what words follow "Mirror, mirror on the wall...?"
2. What happened to Charles I after he was found guilty of treason in 1649?

3. What is the title of a Wallace & Gromit film where a villainous penguin has designs on thieving an article of clothing?
4. In the traditional folk song "Soldier, soldier won't you marry me", what does he carry?
5. What fruit, native to tropical Africa, is now commonly used in Asian and Caribbean cuisine to create sauces, chutneys and curries?
6. Luke, "The Nuke" suddenly sprang to fame in 2024 as the youngest player to get to a final of a major tournament in this sport.
7. What are witnesses expected to do before giving evidence in court?
8. Where do French holiday makers go to get their foreign spending money?
9. Alternatively, how do some holiday makers spend their time if they can't be bothered, or don't have the wherewithal, to go abroad?
10. What do you call a master craftsman who makes bows, and is also an archaic word for archer?
11. If you set one of these you are said to be establishing a rule or practice that will be followed in future.
12. If your cat or dog is bothering your neighbours pets with unwanted advances, you might take it to the vet to...
13. The home of the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet club.
14. One of a group of invasive plants that can affect building structures.
15. What is the name of the joint used in carpentry where 2 pieces of wood are joined using interlocking wedge shapes?
16. Who was the preacher active during the Renaissance in Florence, famous for burning books and what he considered to be immoral art? He also condemned the clergy and Church of Rome under Pope Alexander VI.
17. What babies might do whilst chewing on a dummy/pacifier.
18. Which dumpy twins feature in Lewis Carroll's book "Through the Looking Glass"?
19. If something is about to appear or happen it might be said to be this.
20. In which county are the towns known as the five potteries (although there are six) situated? They are Tunstall, Burslem, Hanley, Stoke, Fenton and Longton.

*Answers are at the end of this Magazine*

## Forthcoming Meetings

All meetings start at 2:00pm

|                       |                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>August</b>         | No meeting                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>21st September</b> | <b>My Creative Journey in Fashion</b> by Amanda Sutherland. Film, television and theatrical costume design, and an accessories business...                |
| <b>19th October</b>   | Annual General Meeting. Further arrangements to be confirmed.                                                                                             |
| <b>16th November</b>  | <b>Sentiments of Christmas</b> by Jim Stebbings. Aspects of the traditional Christmas season conveyed through music, stories, humour, images and pictures |

For more detailed information about these meetings, please visit the Events page of the Hunstanton u3a website: <https://hunstanton.u3asite.uk/events/>

## Admin...

### 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](mailto: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](mailto:memsec@hunstantonu3a.org)

## Magazine Copy Date

Items for the next magazine are required before **MONDAY 14th SEPTEMBER 2026**. Please send them to David at [newsletter@hunstantonu3a.org](mailto: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. Or you can simply type your text into an email, and I will extract and format it for publication. **No PDFs** please.

Photographs are more than welcome, on their own or accompanying articles. Just attach them to an email.

**Thank you** to everyone who has contributed to this issue.

More please!

## Answers to the Quiz

- 1 “...who is the fairest of them all?” (Aire)
- 2 He was executed (Exe)
- 3 The Wrong Trousers (Ouse)
- 4 Musket, fife and drum (Usk)
- 5 Tamarind (Tamar)
- 6 Darts (Dart)
- 7 Swear an oath (Wear)
- 8 Bureau de Change (Bure and Ure)
- 9 Have a staycation (Tay)
- 10 Bowyer (Wye)
- 11 Precedent (Eden)
- 12 Get it speyed. Although spay is now a more usual spelling, both versions are correct. (Spey)
- 13 Wimbledon (Don)
- 14 Japanese Knotweed (Tweed)
- 15 Dovetail (Dove)
- 16 Girolama Savonarola (Avon)
- 17 Dribble (Ribble)
- 18 Tweedledum & Tweedledee (Dee and Tweed)
- 19 Forthcoming (Forth)
- 20 Staffordshire (Taff)

## STOP PRESS!

### A Reminder from our Membership Secretary

The 1st September means it's membership renewal time again. All members will be sent details of how to renew their membership and we look forward to your continuing with us for the next year.

Please wait until you receive this invitation and **do not** make payment before 1st September.

**Margaret**

## That's All Folks!