November 2026

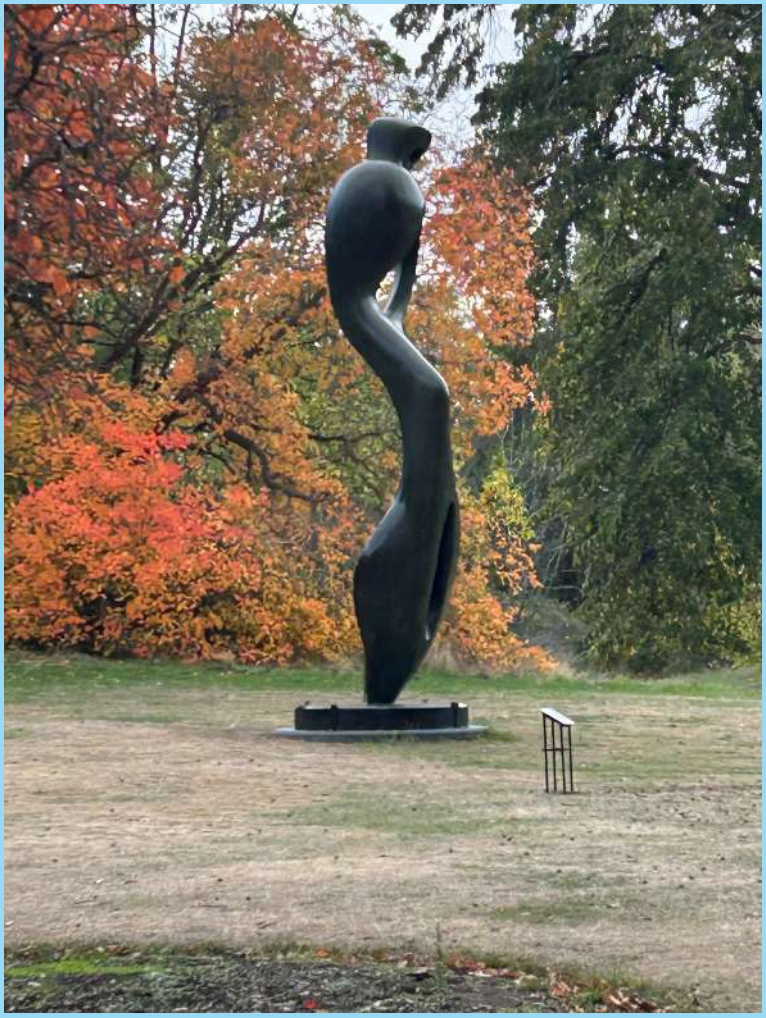
Hunstanton u3a Magazine

learn, laugh, live

Keeping our members in touch

A Henry Moore sculpture, snapped on the Art Appreciation visit to Kew Gardens.

More strange exhibits, and a full report, inside.



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

Dear members,

October and November seems to be a busy time for our Committee. Last month we held the AGM. The turnout of members was pleasing and we all enjoyed the quiz and the birthday cupcakes. Taking a u3a mug home was an added bonus!

Since then, there has been a New Members meeting and it was pleasant to meet those members who have just joined us.

Then, at the beginning of November, we held our bi-monthly committee meeting. I am pleased to say that all posts are now filled so that we have a vibrant and committed committee!

We are now preparing to organise the Christmas party and I thank those members that have offered to be on the sub-committee for the party, and those who have offered to help on the day. Please do not forget to buy yourself a ticket (£5) at the November meeting. We are limited to 100 attendees. Remember that the party will be on the 2nd Monday in December (not the usual 3rd Monday) and will start at 1pm.

With best wishes

Hilary

From our Committee

Our Committee Members

Role	Name	email
Chair	Hilary Farrell	chair@hunstantonu3a.org
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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: When 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!

Tea, Coffee and Biscuits will be Free at Monthly Members’ Meetings!

From now onwards, Members no longer have to pay 50p on entry to the Monthly Members’ Meeting. This decision was made possible as a result of the change, announced by our Treasurer at the AGM, which amalgamated the Social and Main funds.

Members will still need to register their attendance when they enter the Community Centre, but this is mainly so that, in case of a fire, we know who is present.

A Slight Editorial

This edition of the Hunstanton u3a magazine is smaller than it was in September and October but, thanks to the response to my emailed plea for more articles, it should still be a good read.

One of our readers mildly complained to me that the magazine is too long now, and could I please hold over some articles to the following month. Newsletters are designed to be read in one sitting but, now that we have replaced ours by a magazine, I expect it to be dipped into over a longer period.

If I receive an overwhelming number of requests to limit the size, then I will, of course, aim at making it shorter. For now, however, that was a lone voice compared with the number of members who tell me that they like a magazine that they can get their teeth into.

Sylvia

As you know, I sent out an email informing members of the details of the funeral of our long-time editor, Sylvia Pratt. I’m delighted to announce that there were around forty mourners on the day, more than ten of whom were from our u3a. A few other members told me that they would have liked to attend but they had prior commitments that they could not break.

More than one of those attending told me that they only found out about the funeral through my email, so I'm very glad that I sent it.

It was a fine send-off, and the large turnout from the Ingoldisthorpe Women's Institute, of which Sylvia had been an important member, was in particularly fine voice. My grateful thanks go to all the u3a members who came to pay their respects.

u3a Christmas Party



We look forward to welcoming you to our Christmas Party on Monday 14th December. It is held this year at Hunstanton Community Centre (where we usually meet) and begins at 1pm. Ticket holders only.

The sub-committee is busy organising it all, ordering the food, preparing the raffle and sorting out the entertainment. This year we shall start with the party food (cold buffet), followed by the entertainment and then a raffle. There might even be a Christmas quiz!

Please get your ticket at the November meeting, cost £5. Christmas is nearly upon us!!!

Hilary

From our Groups

Environment

Sizewell B Nuclear Power Station Guided Tour



On a bright late September morning, somewhere between late Summer and early Autumn, we set off from Norfolk to make our way over to Leiston in Suffolk and a very special visit to Sizewell B Nuclear Power Station.

Such a unique opportunity brings about many thoughts, along with curiosity and a sense of anticipation.

The drive on the A47 via Norwich and then on the smaller B roads took us just over 2 hours, along with a short stop on the way.

Things become quieter and less hectic entering Suffolk. It is a county that still appears to have held on to an idea of 'Olde Worlde' England. Approaching the area around the station we also drove through the site where the new Sizewell C station is being constructed. It proves appearances can be deceptive.

This is a massive project for a massive energy demand.

The entrance to the EDF (Électricité de France) site is discreet. So discreet in fact, it took some time to actually find the visitors' car park.

We entered the reception and were warmly welcomed by staff. After signing in we gathered to eat our packed lunches and drink a cup of tea around one of the tables, where there were displays and educational material.

At 1:00pm prompt, two ladies from the staff showed us to a small conference room where they gave a talk about nuclear energy, the purpose and history of Sizewell, and security and safety. All mobile phones and any

potential recording or filming devices were handed in, along with our ID, and while the talk was underway security checks were carried out on our documents.

After the talk we were given back our IDs and kitted out in safety gear (hi-vis jackets, hard hats, gloves, goggles and ear protectors). Our group consisted of twelve (the maximum) plus two guides.

Security is obviously of the highest priority, and we were given strict instructions as to where we could and couldn't go, where we could walk and staying together in the group.

With one guide at the front and one at the rear we made our way out of reception and passed heavily armed police – Sizewell has its own police force, the Civil Nuclear Constabulary (CNC) – along to further security and scanning checks.

We then received our visitor passes and individual codes to get through the final turnstile security gate.

It seemed a bit like stepping into another world, and I suppose it was.

Everything operates at an incredible intensity, predominantly out of view, and those with just the smallest amount more knowledge than me of nuclear power will know why.

We were escorted through the site. Whilst many maintenance workers and staff were seen around the site, the actual control centre is at a top secret location. There is also a secondary control centre away from Sizewell in the event of an emergency.

Sizewell A has been decommissioned and Sizewell C is under construction. The construction of Sizewell C includes major infrastructure to deliver materials to site and, when complete, it will consist of two nuclear reactors.

Sizewell B is a Pressurised Water Reactor and the only one of this type in the UK. Construction started in 1987 and it synchronised to the National Grid in 1995. It generates around 1,200 Megawatts, supplying 3% of the UK's electrical demand – enough for about 2.5 million homes. Its operational lifetime has been extended to 2055. It has 600 full-time employees and 300 full-time contractors.

Understandably, we could not enter the Reactor Building. This is the huge domed structure which is this shape to contain high internal pressures – should the need arise! It is 65 m tall with a diameter of 45 m with a wall thickness of 1.4 m of pre-stressed reinforced concrete lined with a 6 mm gas-tight plate.

We passed close to the iconic dome that houses the reactor building itself and also went to a viewing platform that showed where the vast quantities of sea water for cooling are taken into the power station, filtered and pumped back out into the North Sea. Perhaps the most impressive part of the day was being shown around the vast turbine hall, along public tour walkways, which were a 50 step climb, 12 meters above the machinery and pipe work.

Once inside the Turbine Hall we were greeted with a cavernous space devoid of any internal columns. The building is 120m long x 50m wide and 27m tall with a basement extending down by 8m. We had climbed to get in and, on looking down, it was clear that the building extended below the point that we had entered. It is enormous and something to behold.



Two turbine generators run down either side of the building and a massive platform is at ground level, on which the massive components are placed ready for installation. Four overhead bridge cranes are at high level above. These are 65m long and weigh 130 tonnes each.

Each turbine generator consists of a high-pressure turbine with three low pressure turbines all on the same physical shaft. The shaft, running at 3,000 rpm (which is why we have 50 Hz supply in the UK), connects to a generator. Each turbine consumes 1 tonne of steam per second at 300 degrees C. Each turbine generator set produces 650 MW of electricity.

This huge machine feels alive. The open checker plate floor vibrates and you can feel the raw power being harnessed. It's clean and looks well-maintained.

A long and fascinating tour of the station ended with our return to reception, a quick cup of tea and then the drive home with all of us probably having had a truly memorable and unique experience and as much, if not more,

curiosity and questions than before. The enormous present and future demands for energy demand enormous solutions.

Our visit to Sizewell B was organised by the Hunstanton u3a Environment Group as part of their Sustainable Energy project. New members would be most welcome.

Anne Clark and **Norman Mitchell**

Photos provided by EDF

Art Appreciation

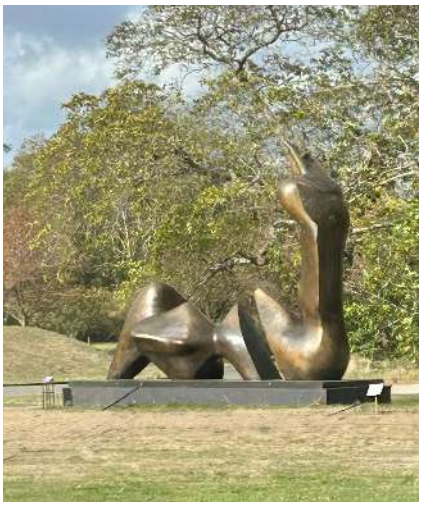
Coach Outing to Kew Gardens and the Henry Moore Sculpture Exhibition



Twenty-nine members of Hunstanton u3a enjoyed a wonderful day out on Wednesday, 14 October 2026, when we travelled by coach to the world-famous Kew Gardens in London to visit the Henry Moore sculpture exhibition.

The weather was kind to us, providing ideal conditions for exploring the beautiful gardens and extensive grounds. Members had the opportunity to wander at their leisure, taking in the stunning autumn colours, impressive glasshouses and many of Kew's horticultural treasures.

A particular highlight of the visit was the exhibition of sculptures by the renowned British artist Henry Moore. The large-scale works were displayed throughout the landscape, creating a striking contrast between art and nature. Members were fascinated by the sculptures and enjoyed seeing these iconic pieces set against the backdrop of Kew's magnificent gardens.



There was plenty of time to enjoy lunch, visit the shops, and explore the many attractions that Kew has to offer. The day provided an excellent opportunity for members to socialise, relax and appreciate both the artistic and natural beauty on display.

The outing was enjoyed by everyone and proved to be a memorable experience. Thanks go to the organiser Jacquie and coach driver for ensuring that the day ran smoothly and safely.

We look forward to arranging more enjoyable visits for members in the future.

Jill Davis



A spectacular cactus in the hothouse



Military Matters

The military matters group were on their travels again on Wednesday 4th November. Those that could attend set off at an earlier time for us to the far reaches of Neatishead to the RAF Air Defence Radar Museum. This museum is an exact replica to the original base that was set deep underground and used to monitor the skies and approaches to Great Britain during the Cold War times of the 1950's up until its destruction by fire in 1966. A good year for English football, for those of us who follow it – but not for this base, which a disgruntled airman destroyed by setting a bin alight. An action which, because of its site and being underground there was difficulty getting water to it and in dealing with it, alas took the lives of three firemen.



We were warmly welcomed by the volunteers who managed the museum and introduced to the starting of Radar during the early war years and shown how Radar, along with ground observers, discovered attacking German aircraft, and how they were tracked and brought to the notice of the RAF to deal with.

I had seen in films the operations rooms where WAAFs (Women's Auxiliary Air Force) staff moved little indicator arrows around a big table.



Now we were being informed how they got that information and how they monitored the flight paths, along with where they sent the information to. An interesting informative lecture, followed by a brief talk from a volunteer who was a small boy during the war living in the area.

After a quick coffee we moved to the Cold War Rooms, where we got to sit at the long banks of computer terminals used during the 1960s, radar screens blinking, rows and rows of buttons, and screens high on the wall showing information from those monitoring the computers. Fortunately, all the equipment was only showing displays as we sat and started pushing buttons, testing the headphones to see if they worked and then were told push any button you want but not the ones marked pigeons or the red one.

Looking at the banks of buttons, there must have been ten red ones, all of which we had already pressed. Again, a very clear informative talk from staff – the thought of sitting in this darkened room with machines whirring all around you, headphones on and staring at radar screens as a tour of duty for hours at a time, made me feel claustrophobic.

We managed lunch and another coffee then started viewing the various rooms of the museum, all being given information on aspects of the Second World War and use of Radar, along with the connections to Coltishall air base. One of the highlights of the day was Terry sitting in the cockpit of a Tornado jet fighter looking every bit an Ace. Fortunately, the ejector seat had been put outside and, as George was suffering rib injuries, when he tried it out he struggled to get up. He chose to ignore David's suggestion of using the quick exit route by pulling the handle at the front. I don't think hitting the roof would have been beneficial. As we headed for the exit, David and Terry found some old fellow to chat to; he looked familiar but I am younger than them.

On leaving, we found the exhibit of the Bloodhound surface to air missile, a photo opportunity for Terry, George and David, along with mobile radar systems and a photo opportunity for Martin with the Rapier surface to air missiles, used as a security measure during the London Olympics.

An enjoyable experience on a damp day. I can't believe that our former chairman (Norman) chose to go to New Zealand rather than this outing.

Martin Turner









From our Members

Flash Fiction

Volvo

Seaside town. Empty road. Midnight. One car remains parked in the moonlight. I've noticed it there for several days now. It never moves. A black Volvo estate from the 1970s.

Unremarkable you'd think. But each side window is covered with a Union flag. The back window displays a CCTV warning notice, and the roof has parts of television aerials strapped to it. In daylight, a chair can be seen, as if the car was loaded quickly with furniture.

Approaching with caution, I see there is a man asleep in the passenger seat, his head on a pillow on the driver's side. A takeaway coffee cup languishes on the dashboard.

I want to check he's OK. But I dare not. How to approach him in any case – knock on his window? Ask him if he's alright? Ask him what he's doing? I've seen him in daylight, his bulky body leaning back in the seat, smoking slowly. Lost in contemplation he gazes at the parked vehicle in front.

Seven days and nights. Parked up.

Then, overnight, he was gone.

I caught a headline in Tesco Express: "Search for Euromillions winner…."

Septimus Solo

Septimus Solo is the assumed name of a Hunstanton u3a member

The Fun of being Granny

Visits from our eight-year-old grandson promise some new experiences for us seniors, and the October half term did not disappoint.



The *Rude Science* show was at once disgusting, dramatic and educational. Children had the satisfaction of hearing Stefan Gates use terms guaranteed to make adults frown and cringe. His graphic descriptions of bodily functions left nothing unimagined. The pace was fast as scientific facts were illustrated by a range of tricks, jokes and exploits.

Hapless parents, volunteered by their offspring were made to consume revolting ingredients or handle nasty concoctions that repulsed onlookers. (No one died). Flames, explosions and effervescent mixtures showed the reactions of our organs to the things we eat and drink. We shrank in our seats when the presenters stoked a machine designed to send smells into the auditorium. To our relief the giant smoke rings that filled the Corn Exchange actually contained delicate fragrances and not the expected malodours.

The finale saw Stefan lie on his back, with legs in V shape and an enormous elastic band attached to his feet. He drew it back and catapulted Pudsey Bear to reach the seats right at the back. You can imagine the scramble to claim it.



Dinner was, predictably, burger and chips with lashings of tomato ketchup. After that the creativity of the Rose and Crown's kids menu was showcased by a dessert name Fairground. A feast for the eyes and tummy, it consisted of ice cream profiterole, toffee apple, marshmallow, candy floss, flying saucers, Smarties and a gummy. Look at the picture. Isn't it superb?

Virginia Young

A Singer's Life

After studying at the Royal Academy of Music with a view to pursuing a career in singing, I worked with small groups and sang in churches and synagogues as part of their professional choirs.

A successful audition took me to Scotland to work with Scottish Opera, where I was fortunate enough to be when Kiri Te Kanawa made her debut in Verdi's opera *Otello* with Peter Glossop and Charles Craig, and Janet Baker sang Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier,* by Richard Strauss. It was wonderful to be employed and be able to watch and learn from people of that calibre.



Kiri Te Kanawa in *Otello*

The next company I joined was English National Opera, performing at the London Coliseum, which has one of the biggest stages in London. We performed in London and also toured around the country performing in smaller theatres, which occasionally led to difficulties for singers to get on and off the stage because the set had been adapted.

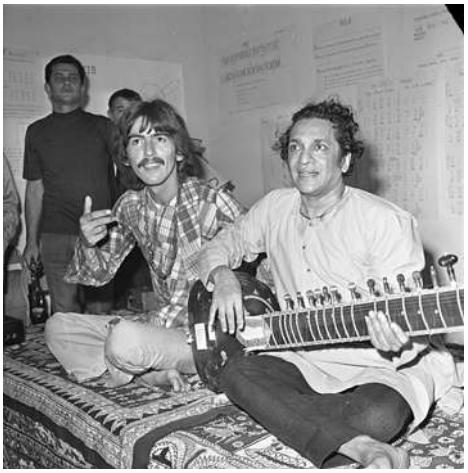
One particularly poignant moment in a performance of *Manon* by Massenet was ruined when someone walked through the scenery where there was usually an exit opening, making a loud ripping sound as the material tore; it was difficult to maintain a solemn demeanour at that point.

Touring had its advantages, for example in Bristol a tour round Harvey's Sherry Company, ending with a buffet and copious tasting was arranged, which led to an interesting performance that evening!

I left ENO to go freelance and worked with opera companies in France, Germany, Holland and Israel, as well as singing with the BBC singers when extra numbers were required. Bookings came for sessions when ad hoc chorus singers were required for opera recordings; Joan Sutherland and Luciano Pavarotti was one of the most memorable.



Joan Sutherland and Luciano Pavarotti in *I puitani* in 1976



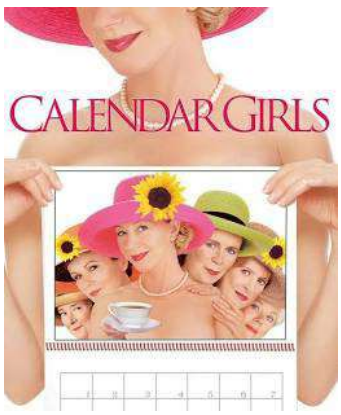
George Harrison and Ravi Shankar in 1967

On one occasion eight singers were asked to meet at Baker Street Station to pick up a bus hired to take us to a secret location. We were taken to George Harrison's house, where he and Ravi Shankar were making a recording of Indian Ragas – a new musical experience for all of us.

Occasionally I was booked to sing in a small group to boost the soundtrack of a film, one job was singing Jerusalem in Calendar Girls and another was in Quartet, after which we were invited to the première in Leicester Square – another unforgettable experience, particularly meeting Dustin Hoffman!

My life as a professional singer has brought many interesting and happy times which I look back on with pleasure.

Jean Hornbuckle





Tea For Three



“Quick, quick, into this shop and don’t argue.” Maisie felt herself being rapidly forced into a coffee shop by her mother’s firm grip on her arm and straight to the furthest table from the door and windows. Her mother sat down quickly facing the wall. “Don’t look out but there’s that dreadful woman, Jessica Judge, who’s the biggest gossip in town and I don’t want her to spoil our morning.” Maisie had been enjoying her morning with her Mum. She was back in the old town on a shopping spree and had just commented, “I can’t remember the last time, just the two of us, had managed to do this.” It looked as if it may already be spoilt.

With that, the door burst open and a big-bosomed woman, with feathered hat, over-sized skirt and worn brogues, erupted into the premises looking wildly around. “Ah, I thought I saw you, Rachael,” she said in a booming voice, startling the other customers and managing to overturn the cream jug over the table as she tried to manoeuvre her extra-large shopping trolley through the narrow aisles. She also ran over the paws of a resting dog. “Shouldn’t be allowed to bring animals into catering establishments,” she bellowed.

The waitress frowned as she came over with a cloth to mop the table. “I’ll take your orders after I’ve cleaned up”, she said pointedly. Rachael and Maisie both apologised and didn’t know why. Jessica thundered, “Shouldn’t have been left on the table, my girl. It pays to clear tables quickly.” The girl gave a nod and a knowing smirk to Rachael and Maisie.

“Now then, where was I?” she continued, as she pulled a chair from another table, and sat down with her trolley blocking the access of adjacent tables. She ran her fingers across the table, “I’m not surprised; it’s sticky, this hasn’t been wiped down properly. Anyway, I just had to stop and tell you about the latest exploits of the town traffic warden who I had an up and downer with. You know who I mean, that weedy little man who thinks he has grown eighteen inches every time he dons his uniform and peaked hat. Well, I had a run-in with him about six months ago; I’d only parked my car near the zebra crossing whilst I popped into the library. Well, I’d only gone in to return my books and I met Audrey Middlesmith, she’s such a gossip and I just couldn’t get away. When I came out, the weed had put a ticket on my windscreen – something about parking on zig-zag lines in the zone of a pedestrian crossing. I think he just makes up the rules. I wouldn’t pay the fine and represented myself in court, of course, and they kept telling me to keep quiet and stop interrupting the proceedings and then they had the cheek to fine me £85 and put three points on my licence. It didn’t help when I told them I hadn’t seen my licence in years.”

At this point, the waitress came over to take the orders and, without asking, Jessica ordered a pot of tea before Rachael and Maisie had even thought about it. “You’ll have to move this trolley, madam,” she said, “it’s a health and safety hazard. There’s a proper space over near the door.”

Jessica angrily and grudgingly moved her trolley, “In my day we didn’t worry about nonsense like that, we just got on with life.” She barged into the waitress in her temper. Maisie couldn’t believe what was happening, especially as all the other customers had started listening intently to the table’s rants.

“Oh, Jessica, I don’t think you’ve met my Maisie, she’s at university now and we don’t have much time together.” It was as though Rachael had not spoken and Jessica continued, “Now, where was I? Oh yes, the traffic warden. You’ll never believe this but just as I was passing the Town Hall this morning, the little weed was sticking a parking notice on the mayor’s chauffeured car which was parked outside the town hall. He got his comeuppance when the Chief Constable left the entourage, marched up to him, reprimanded him and sent him on his way. I clapped and a police constable had the cheek to move me on too. I’ve been trying to think who that warden is, and it’s now come to me. He’s the son-in-law of that Marjorie Dawes who married that Herbert Tasker, who was in our class at school. He used to live down Milton Avenue, you remember. You probably heard he got arrested for shoplifting in Sainsbury’s. Yes, a beef joint, two boxes of chocolates and a bottle of

rum. I never really liked him at school particularly when he had a crush on that Sarah Donaldson after he'd asked me out." It was evident by now that the other customers were clearly enjoying, and totally absorbed in, Jessica's ramblings, to the extent that they were totally silent. Jessica was completely unaware.

"Oh, talking of old school friends, I saw John Gibson, you must remember him; he was in the class above us. He did look poorly. Met him at the doctor's, that practice down Windsor Lane, and asked him what his trouble was and whether he'd had to wait long for an appointment and whether he was seeing the nurse or a doctor. He didn't seem to want to talk, but he did look poorly. The last time I saw anybody looking like that they didn't last long. Of course, I didn't have an appointment myself, well, I don't use that doctor's surgery, just use the waiting room to catch up, have a warm and use the loo. That's another thing, the receptionist had the cheek to ask me who I was waiting for because it was so packed and patients were having to stand. I told her that I wasn't a patient of theirs and she told me to leave. I had to remind her that I was a customer of the NHS, with whom she was employed, and that I would be writing to the practice manager to voice my concerns over her rudeness. I just can't repeat what she replied. So, I've copied the letter to my MP. Not that I have any trust in the government. As expected, I haven't even had the courtesy of an acknowledgement. I don't know how they are elected. I don't like to gossip but I heard over the grapevine that our MP is having an affair with the deputy health secretary. I haven't even bothered to look up who she is, but another of my friends is going to look into it. You don't know, do you Rachael?"

The embarrassed Rachael coughed, aware that the customers were listening with baited breath whilst Maisie sat with dropped jaw, "I haven't a clue, Jessica, I think I must live in a different world to you and certainly a different town." Jessica didn't notice the pointed reply but all the customers and the waitress grinned at each other.

Before Rachael and Maisie had finished their coffees, Jessica suddenly stood up; how she'd managed to empty the teapot, downing two large cups of tea and pontificate at the same time was beyond belief. "Lovely to catch up and hear all your latest news", she bellowed. At that moment, the waitress brought the bill which Jessica scanned, "How much? I can't believe it, I insist you don't leave a tip," and with that she marched to her trolley and left the premises. She was completely unaware of the cheering and clapping from the customers and waitress as she strutted down the High Street. "Oh, you must come again and bring your friend", one of the customers said giggling, "it's been the most entertaining Saturday morning I've had in a long time." Rachael and Maisie sat there traumatised, not really wanting to finish their cold coffees.

Dave Taylor



Consumer affairs: Buyer Beware, the Supermarket Surcharge

This is a true story – before you all moan about this guy Septimus Solo being featured yet again. I know I've been put before the u3a board on previous occasions, but this true story is a warning as Christmas advertising approaches.

My wife on her way home from 100 miles away, popped into a very posh national supermarket in Ely – as you do, living only just up the road in Hunstanton. 42 miles, or 1 hour 11 minutes. Whilst there, she bought, among other nice things, a rump steak *"Too good to waste"* proclaimed the label – only £4.64.

Once home (42 miles, one hour eleven minutes later – this is crucial by the way) she checked the receipt only to find she had been charged for **two** steaks – £4.64 AND an extra £6.10 on top.

This can't be right. Phone call to Posh Supermarket Ely. "Sorry", (I think the lady said, although it was almost impossible to catch what she was actually saying) "can't do anything". "What? You've overcharged me by £6.10, and you expect me to return to Ely (84 miles 2 hours and 22 minutes, 8 litres of fuel total around £16 and my time)?"

Ten minutes later the Customer Service number was produced. Once through, the lady at Customer Service was also saying nothing could be done, but maybe an E voucher?

"How much for?" OK. "What do I do next… *silence…* are you there, are you there?..." Phone disconnected. "Are you still there?" *Silence.*

I mean, this is Posh Supermarket Ely. Isn't it? Tried again. Someone else in Customer Service. Explained again. Too far to travel for £6.10 but it was **your** mistake not mine. What was my email? The email address had to be repeated several times, having to constantly correct the letters in the address for accuracy. By this time, an hour on the phone to PSE.

Then, miracle! An explanation of how to take this forward! Hurrah!! In order to get a refund, an account has to be created. The lengthy bureaucratic procedure was sporadically laid out, like a minestrone soup where the bits had to be drained and then joined up to make a chain.

I mean, PSE have made the mistake; **I** am the customer! This is a point of principal. They owe me back my £6.10. I'm not bothered how they want my customer experience to be the best, how keen they are to have satisfied customers, and how grateful they are for my call.

Not giving up, a further call to PSE. (Now 84 miles 2 hours and 22 minutes, 8 litres of fuel total around £16 **and** my time getting on for 1hr 30 minutes on the phone.)

But his time, nearly two hours later… SUCCESS!!! New person, actually speaking from PSE, not even a manager, spoke clearly and sympathetically. There had been a problem with the bar code resulting in the overcharge.

If our daughter (five minutes on foot) could drop in they would refund the £6.10 to her in person. Job done.

Exhausted. Moral: check your receipt BEFORE you leave the store. Happy Christmas?

Septimus Solo

Septimus Solo is the assumed name of a Hunstanton u3a member

Reminiscing about a hobby of mine

I would like to share with you some thoughts and recollections of a lifelong hobby of mine.

It involves being outdoors, sometimes in all weathers, if I feel like it. Also connecting with our natural world and having to use your instincts at times, learning the art of patience and enjoying peace and quiet and sometimes solitude.

What is it? The art of angling, first described by Izaak Walton, writer and biographer, in his famous book called *The Compleat Angler* back in the 17th century. It was a pastoral book about the art and spirit of angling in the day.

I was first introduced to fishing at around the age of nine by my father, who was a keen angler, and he used to tell me many tales of his exploits on the Norfolk broads with his mates after getting demobbed from the army. We lived in Edmonton, North London, and just down the road was the local canal called the Lee canal which runs alongside the river Lea.

My father would take me to Cooks Ferry which was in Edmonton, next to the Lee canal, where we would have many a happy hour catching gudgeon which were small fish – but that didn't matter to me, they were still fish. At that tender age I was well and truly hooked on fishing.

When I was about twelve, I would go down to the canal on my own with a wooden stool, an old wooden sea rod together with an antiquated wooden reel, and sit for hours fishing between the moored barges catching gudgeon all day long. Sheer bliss!

The fascination wasn't only in catching the fish but also watching the cork bodies float go under when the fish took the bait, which was always bread or bread paste. It was handy having a father who was a baker's roundsman!

There was no such thing as thermal clothing back in the early 60's so, when I wanted to fish in the winter, I would wear a couple of pairs of trousers, a couple of shirts and jumpers, and borrow my father's old donkey jacket. What a sight I must have looked, walking – or probably waddling – down Edmonton High Street towards my beloved canal looking more like Michelin man, the famous French tyre mascot.

I remember that even heavy snow wouldn't put me off my fishing. I would sit on my wooden seat, watching the snow fall onto the water with a sense of fascination. To any bystander I probably looked like a fishing snowman. The proper fishing umbrella was too expensive for a twelve-year-old to buy, so I would borrow my mother's umbrella on occasions.

In those days, fishing rods were made out of different types of cane or tank ariels which, after the war, were in abundance. There was built cane, split cane, green heart and Spanish reed to name a few. They were great to use, although rather heavy and not that strong. Unlike today's fishing rods which are made from carbon fibre and boron, making them super strong.

I think back to those days, an ex-army rucksack for my reel and floats, a fishing rod, landing net and a stool. That was all I needed to catch fish, and this was all that most anglers had by way of fishing tackle.

Today's modern fishing is totally different; a lot of anglers nowadays like to fish for carp and are always trying to catch a bigger fish. The British record for a carp is over 68lb, which is a very big fish. Most fanatical carp anglers have to use a fishing wheelbarrow to carry all their fishing tackle down to the bankside.

Oh, how I yearn for those early, simplistic days of fishing. So do a lot of modern anglers actually.



At the end of the day, it is how you present your fishing bait on your line that counts but, actually, part of the fun of fishing is building up your fishing tackle – ask any angler. I remember as a lad going into my local fishing tackle shop on a Saturday afternoon and buying my fishing bait, which graduated from bread paste to a pint of maggots.

They were kept in a large fridge in the tackle shop and, when you wanted to buy a pint of maggots, the shop keeper would get a special one-pint mug and scoop out a pint of maggots out of a large container into your bait box.

I remember, as a lad on one occasion, sitting on the electric train which was going from Lower Edmonton to Cheshunt in Hertfordshire where there were some good fishing lakes and also the Lee canal. I happened to look at the seat next to me and to my horror there were some small wriggly things working their way into the creases of the seats.

On closer inspection, I realised that they were maggots and that my bait box lid had come off in my rucksack and the maggots were escaping!

Fortunately, I was able to get most of them back from the seat next to me although some did escape down the crease. There is an old fishing joke: What is worse than finding a maggot in your sandwiches…. Half a maggot! How true.

Joking aside, fishing is actually very good for your mental health. It was the first participation sport to be allowed to restart after the Covid era and I have spoken to a lot of anglers who have told me that it really helped them with their mental health just to be able to get back onto the bankside again.

My fishing has, over the years, evolved into a hobby which is not just about catching fish, it is also about conservation and looking after our countryside and wildlife. I am involved on a voluntary basis with a local angling association and thoroughly enjoy walking round the lakes and taking in all that nature has to offer as well as feeling that I am putting something back into the hobby that I have had a lifetime of enjoyment from.

Maybe I have given you something to think about by way of starting a new hobby or have rekindled that spark from way back.

If you need any help or advice about fishing, I will be delighted to offer it.

Tight lines,

Allan Howlings

A Spooky Story?



The house stood alone. Neglected and forgotten by most. Once one of a group of what once had been four, but now the sole survivor. Only the flattened area to its side, used as a car park and now covered by snow, showed where its companions had stood before succumbing to the developer's machinery. How it had remained untouched was a mystery; nobody was completely sure, but there it remained. Why the developers had not made an offer Adam Maynard did not know but he felt himself drawn towards it and, not only that, he could see the hugely positive potential. So, here he was, meeting with a representative of the previous owner's family. He stood by his car waiting, snowflakes drifting lazily around him, visualising just how the house could and should look when he was startled by a voice behind him. A tall cadaverous man, dressed in all black, stood there.

"Mister Maynard? Sorry to keep you waiting" and, offering an outstretched hand, the man behind the voice introduced himself. "My name is Gregory and I have been asked to act on behalf of the family."

"Oh yes. That's me, Adam Maynard. Pleased to meet you. Sorry if I jumped but I didn't hear you." Adam replied. As he did so he realised just why he had not heard any sounds of Gregory's arrival. There was no car. Nor had he heard any footsteps. It was snowing, sure, but not enough to muffle the sounds of someone approaching, surely. What's more there were no footprints! Puzzled by these realisations Adam almost missed Gregory's "Shall we go in before it gets any darker, and get out of this snow of course."

A large set of keys were produced from a pocket in Gregory's somewhat large and old-fashioned coat, and they both made their way to the front door, which opened easily and without any protestation or creaking of hinges. Adam forgot all about his puzzlement as he entered the impressive hallway for, even in the gloom, he could see the beautiful wooden staircase ahead of him. The gloom, however, seemed more intense as they passed into what had obviously been once, the dining room. The eerie orange light from the arc lamps in the car park outside hardly brushed aside the dark in the room. It tried manfully where it entered, through the cracked and missing panes, but only succeeded in making the darkness seem even darker. The glow highlighted the cobwebs that draped across the corner of one window, as it pulsated gently in the breeze that flapped the remnants of the tattered curtains hanging there. The light bounced gently off the old, chipped teapot sitting on the single wall shelf and then seemed to be swallowed up as it met the dusty surface of a dark wooden table which stood, with its companion chairs, on the cold tiled floor. A small puddle had developed where the rain had collected by one leg as it had found its way through an unprotected gap at the bottom of the door. This, by some freak, had made the reflection from its surface gleam like an orange eye of some unknown Cyclops. An overpowering mustiness, brought about by years of disuse, hung in the air to such an extent that not even the draughts coming through the numerous cracks could freshen it. Nevertheless it was still a home to something. A mouse scampered, unafraid, across the floor with some morsel of something it had found, before disappearing through a hole in the corner of the skirting board.

There was a stillness in the air. It was quiet. The quietness of a place where all noise had been sucked out of it. Adam stopped and called out quietly, as though afraid to disturb something. "Mister Gregory. Oh Mister Gregory," But nothing came back. No response. Just the same silence.
Carefully moving on and reaching the bottom of the staircase he put his hand out for the newel post and jumped. A voice came from up the stairs "It's OK for you to come up. The stairs are perfectly safe." Gregory's voice seemed to have an echoing quality as it resonated around the wooden panelling.

"Oh. I wondered where you had got to," replied Adam. "I'm on my way. Where are you?" and, taking a firm grip on the handrail, he began to ascend. The old wooden steps creaked under his tread as he ascended, which

made him wonder. Why had he not heard Gregory go up? Reaching the top, the gloom seemed even deeper and at first Adam could not even make out just where Gregory stood. A shadowy figure, Gregory just seemed to emanate from the doorway saying in his low voice as he did so "Do come through mister Maynard, There is still much to discover", and he turned retreating into the room.

Adam moved forward falteringly as it was becoming darker and gloomier. Reaching the doorway he could see inside the large wooden panelled room, lit by an old oil lamp standing in the middle of a huge oaken table. By its illumination, he could make out the shape of the ornate, high backed chairs surrounding it and there, in the centre of the table in a pool of yellowy light, a very large and dusty book. Intrigued, he stepped into the room and stopped. There was no sign of Gregory. Adam called out. "Where are you? What's going on? Every time you call me you then disappear."

From the shadows Gregory's deep sonorous voice came back, "Do not be concerned. All is well I assure you. You are here. You were meant to come. This place has a history, and you are part of it. Take the book, examine it and all will be revealed."

Stunned, he did not move at first but then, with slow movements, he made his way to the side of the table, pulled out one of the heavy ornate chairs and sat down. Reaching out for the book he was surprised by its weight but, by using both hands, he pulled the dust-covered book toward him and into the pool of yellow light. Carefully, he slowly opened the front cover to the first page. There in the centre of the page in bold script he read…..

"All that we see in life, or even seem to see is, in itself, but a dream – within a dream."

Adam paused and then began turning the pages. There were hundreds of them, but each one was the same – totally blank. He returned to the first page and re-read it. What did it mean? Was he in a dream?

"I don't understand," he turned to speak to Gregory but once more he was gone. "What does all this mean? Slowly pushing himself up, Adam rose, closed the book, and made his way back to the top of the staircase. By now it had turned so much darker and he thought that the oil lamp on the table would be a good idea, and much safer, so he turned and made his way back into the room. Still no sign of Gregory and, reaching the chair, he looked at the book again and wondered. His mind was full of questions. What was it all about? What had drawn him to this place in the first instance? What was the book's message? Who and where was Gregory? Feeling suddenly very weary, Adam pulled the chair out again. Utterly bewildered, he dropped his head in his hands and leant on the table. It was all so unreal. The fact that Gregory kept disappearing, and he had also seemed to expect Adam to arrive when he did. So strange. Adam looked around the shadowy room, his mind in a whirl, and his head began to spin. Leaning forward to rest on the table he rested his head in his hands closed his eyes…

He awoke with a start, feeling cold. A flake of snow brushed his face and as Adam wiped it away he realised he was once again outside standing beside his car looking at the house. Suddenly he was startled by a voice behind him.

"Mister Maynard? Sorry to keep you waiting," and offering an outstretched hand the man behind the voice introduced himself. "My name is Gregory and I have been asked to act on behalf of the family…"

Acam reeled. The words of the book he remembered clearly and once again they filled his mind.
"All that we see in life, or even seem to see, is in itself, but a dream – within a dream."

Was that a fact, and true?

Had it all been some kind of a dream?

Or a premonition?

Arthur Chappell



Beat The Scammers

Here is a summary of Norfolk Trading Standards' latest scam warning.

Some fraudsters have made websites for fake retailers that claim to be family-owned firms selling quality UK-made products. Images may show a UK High Street with Union Jack flags in shot. If you order, you are like

to find a product either never arrives, or is a cheap, mass-produced item from a country such as China. The websites use AI to clone voices, impersonate real people and drop a person's likeness into existing footage.

Some of the old scam-avoidance techniques may now be less successful due to AI. For instance, according to consumer group, *Which?*, wording and grammar is now more accurate, so typos or grammatical errors can no longer be relied upon.

Ways to protect yourself

Never send money, gift cards or personal financial information to someone you have not met in person.

Do your research, such as:

- Checking whether a retailer's address is real.
- For a financial firm, using the Financial Conduct Authority's Firm Checker to ensure a company is authorized to give financial advice.

Do not assume that someone is genuine just because you've heard their voice or seen them on a video call.

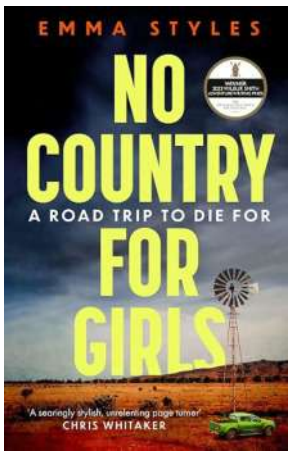
In summary, stop and think before paying, sharing information or taking action. Be especially wary of pressure or urgency – the criminals want you to act before you have time to think.

Sue Hutcheson

Book Reviews

Crime Book group

No Country for Girls by Emma Styles



Charlie and Nao are strangers from different sides of the tracks. They should never have met, but one devastating incident binds them together forever. A man is dead and they are unwilling accomplices in his murder there's only one thing to do. Hit the road in the victim's twin cab UTE with a bag of stolen gold stashed under the passenger seat. Suddenly outlaws, Nao and Charlie must make their way across Australian's remote outback using only their wits survive. They will whatever it takes to evade capture and escape with their lives.

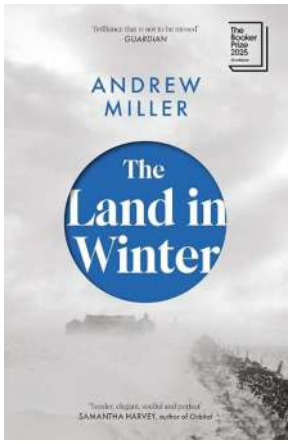
This was our set book last month and wasn't well received. In fact one member said it was crap and unbelievable, although there was one member who thought it was a real page turner and enjoyed it.

This book was set in Australia and if you want to read a good Australian crime book you may like to read *Outback* by Patricia Wolf. This a series of five books and No. six is due out next year. They need to be read in order and they are a good read.

Susan Turner

Book Group 2

The Land in Winter by Andrew Miller



Some of us might remember, or have some memory of The Big Freeze 1962

A shocking opening initially gives way to what might have simply been the story of two very different marriages and how they come to interact. But this novel is set in a very specific place and time that, young as I was, I can recall in fragments. Dressing and keeping warm in front of a two-barred electric fire; doctors who did house calls and knew the family; the whiff of scandal when someone broke the strict social codes that existed in post-war Britain.

Miller's characterisation of the people who seem to have been washed up together almost to their bemusement, is a master stroke. From the philandering country doctor Eric whose mistress tells him he is a 'good' man to Rita, ex-dancer/hostess in a night

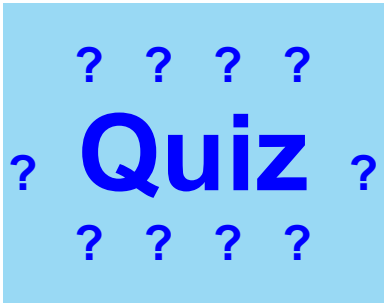
club, who escapes the privations of the farmhouse by cuddling the Aga and reading paperbacks, their inner lives are revealed in minute detail.

Andrew Miller is a master craftsmen when it comes to setting a scene of isolation in both a physical and personal sense. His description of the landscape is beautiful and surprisingly lyrical for what at first sight seems a very traditional novel.

Some, less impressed, have described the pace as slow and plodding but, for me, I found it the equivalent of a Nordic noir series – worth the time and effort taken to immerse the reader.

I so much enjoy this book group, as I've read such a wide variety of books since joining and we always have very different and interesting opinions to discuss about them. Looking forward to the next one!

Helen Beynon



How well do you know our part of Norfolk?

by **Bill Freitas**

1. Hunstanton holds a unique geographical distinction compared to almost every other resort on England's east coast. What is it?
2. The famous cliffs at Hunstanton are made up of three distinctly coloured layers of rock, the two main strata being red and white. What type of rock makes up the layers?
3. What nickname for the cliffs is inspired by those coloured layers?
4. Before it earned the nickname "Sunny Hunny", what name did Henry Le Strange give to his planned Victorian seaside resort?
5. Other than saving ships from grounding on the shallow sandbanks of The Wash, what important role did Hunstanton Lighthouse play during World War I?
6. Despite the local legend, the ship wrecked off Hunstanton beach was not actually used by pirate station Radio Essex. What was the ship's real purpose? Extra credit: where did Radio Essex really broadcast from?
7. Which famous author, creator of the bumbling aristocrat Bertie Wooster and his valet Jeeves, spent childhood holidays in Hunstanton and based the fictional estate Blandings Castle in part on nearby Hunstanton Hall?
8. Norfolk Lavender was founded in 1932. How long did it take to plant the original 13,000 lavender plants?
9. Which historic Native American figure famously visited Heacham Hall after marrying local landowner John Rolfe in 1614?
10. The shallow waters of The Wash are a critical summer nursery ground for which creature?
11. RSPB Titchwell Marsh (or RSPB Snettisham) nature reserve is famous for what?
12. The original 1986 Norfolk Coast Path ran for 84+ miles. Where did it officially start (and end)?
13. King's Lynn was originally known by a different royal title prior to the reign of King Henry VIII. What was the town called before Henry VIII changed its name?
14. King's Lynn was a vital port in the medieval trading and defensive network across northern Europe known as the Hanseatic League. What is the name of the preserved 15th-century warehouse in the town?
15. Which medieval English monarch famously lost his crown treasures in the marshy waters of the Wash in 1216?
16. Which famous 18th-century Royal Navy officer and explorer, who surveyed the Pacific Northwest

coast of North America, was born in King's Lynn in 1757?

17. What distinctive architectural landmark built in 1146 stands on Saturday Market Place in King's Lynn?
18. What is the name of the succulent green sea-vegetable traditionally gathered from the salt marshes around West Norfolk? Other than eating it, what was a common use?
19. What is the local nickname given to the fierce, cold easterly winds that blow off the North Sea?
20. What is the term used in Norfolk dialect to describe someone who was not born in the county?

Answers at the end of the Magazine

Forthcoming Meetings

All meetings start at 2:00pm **except Christmas Party 1:00pm**

16th November	**Sentiments of Christmas** by Jim Stebbings. Aspects of the traditional Christmas season conveyed through music, stories, humour, images and pictures.
14th December	**Christmas Party** Back at the Community Centre by popular demand. **1 pm start!** £5 each. Numbers limited to 100. Booking necessary.
18th January 2027	**Airline Stewardess in 50/60s** by Jilly Hall, Hunstanton u3a member who was in at the early days of package holidays.

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

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

Magazine Copy Date

Items for the next magazine are required before **MONDAY 7th DECEMBER 2026** (a week earlier than usual because the Christmas party is the following Monday). Please send them to David at newsletter@hunstantonu3a.org. You will receive an acknowledgement of your contribution.

Please submit them in WORD, odt (e.g. from Libre Office) or Pages 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. Please convert PDFs to WORD files before sending them, or simply copy and paste the text into an email.

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

A Huge "Thank you" to everyone who has contributed to yet another great issue.

More please!

Answers to the Quiz

1. It faces west, allowing us to watch the sun set over the sea on the east coast.
2. Limestone, aka chalk. The white layer is Ferriby chalk. The red layer is often called Hunstanton

Red Rock or Hunstanton Formation, its colour caused by iron mineral staining, essentially natural rust embedded within the stone. The oft-ignored dark orange-brown layer at the bottom is *carrstone*, iron oxide-cemented sandstone.

3. The Candy Cliffs.
4. St Edmund's, after the local landmark St. Edmund's Point (itself named in honour of St. Edmund the Martyr and the chapel built on the Point), and later became New Hunstanton.
5. Hunstanton Lighthouse played an important role in the development of British military wireless eavesdropping. During World War I, an early Marconi wireless telegraphy station was set up to intercept secret Morse code transmissions between German naval ships and Zeppelins crossing the North Sea.
6. The real Hunstanton beach wreck is the WWII naval target ship HMT Sheraton, while Radio Essex broadcasted from a sea fort in the Thames Estuary
7. P.G. Wodehouse. He stayed frequently at Hunstanton Hall with his uncle, and the famous octagon garden house there inspired settings in his books.
8. The initial planting was done by "three men and a boy" over 18 days for a cost of £15.
9. Pocahontas. She married John Rolfe in 1614 in Jamestown, Virginia, and visited Heacham Hall in 1616–1617 when Rolfe brought her back to England to meet his family. During her months at Heacham, Pocahontas almost certainly walked or rode along the nearby coast, cliffs, and beaches that would become Hunstanton.
10. The Wash is one of the UK's most important nursery grounds for *tope* (Galeorhinus galeus), a slender, fast-swimming species of shark protected under UK conservation rules and IFCA regulations.
11. Huge winter congregations of Pink-footed geese. Nearly the entire breeding population of Pink-footed Geese from Iceland and Greenland migrates here for the winter, with over 100,000 birds arriving for the combination of safe roosting habitat, abundant winter food, and a mild winter climate
12. It originally started at Hunstanton and ended at Cromer. From 2014-2024 the Path was officially extended across the whole length of the Norfolk Coast, a full border-to-border route of approximately 112 miles.
13. Bishop's Lynn (Lynn Episcopi). Apparently, even back then rulers renamed existing geography after themselves.
14. The Hanse House served as England's domestic trading base for German merchant towns like Danzig and Lübeck. It was renamed in 1751 by its new owner, wealthy local merchant Edward Everard, to St Margaret's House. It is the only surviving Hanseatic warehouse in England.
15. King John, shortly before dying in Newark, reportedly from an excess of new cider/ale consumed shortly after losing his baggage train. None of the lost treasures were ever recovered, and their exact fate remains one of Britain's most famous historical mysteries
16. Captain George Vancouver. Despite local legend, it was not Captain James Cook. Vancouver joined the crew of Cook's HMS *Resolution* as a 15 years old midshipman and travelled from the South Pacific to the Antarctic Ocean, visited islands including New Zealand, Tahiti, Tonga, and Easter Island, and crossed the Antarctic Circle for the first time in recorded history. Vancouver Island and the city of Vancouver in Canada are named after him.
17. St Margaret's Church, renamed King's Lynn Minster by the Bishop of Norwich in 2011 to mark its historical and civic importance. On its south tower is a clock face designed to show the phases of the moon and the exact tide times on the River Great Ouse, vital information for local merchants and sailors.
18. Marsh samphire is *Salicornia europaea*. It was often called *glasswort* because its ashes were historically used to yield sodium carbonate (soda ash), a key component in glass-making in the 16th-18th Centuries.
19. The "Lazy Wind," so called because it goes through you rather than around you!
20. A *vister* or *furrenner / furriner* (foreigner).

That's All Folks!