

u3a



**NEWMARKET & DISTRICT
YEARBOOK FOR 2024 –2025**

NEWMARKET & DISTRICT

U3A

Newmarket & District U3A is 38 years old, having been one of the earlier groups of this international organisation.

The letters 'U3A' actually stand for 'University of the Third Age' but we play this down as it tends to give the impression of academia, examinations and qualifications. While there is certainly an element of learning, it is much more about activity, enjoyment and friendship. It provides places to go, things to do and people to meet for those no longer in full time employment, looking for new interests, or simply a change of direction in life.

We hope that you enjoy this snapshot of recent activities, as we continue to provide for members of our community.



FROM THE CHAIRS:

Retiring Chair, Kath Gifkins



Being a member of the u3a has been something I have enjoyed for several years. Trying new interests and making so many friends along the way has been great. It's also been a bonus to learn more about how the Third Age Trust and our own u3a are run by serving on the committee, I would recommend it to anyone who likes to see what goes on behind the scenes.

With very best wishes and over to you Geraldine.....

(See Kath's article later in this YEARBOOK)

Incoming Chair, Geraldine Cornwell



As this edition of the Yearbook goes into publication I have only just had the privilege of being elected chair of Newmarket U3A .

I have been a member for several years and have been impressed by the diversity of subjects offered and the friendliness of the members. I decided to join the executive committee so that I can do my bit to help others enjoy it as much as I have.

Geraldine Cornwell
Chair

SPEAKER MEETINGS

David Soanes

The Speaker Meetings are the essence of the U3A. Held monthly, the topics are carefully selected to provide a wide range of matters of interest for all our members. The Newmarket U3A website publishes the programme with information about each subject. In April 2025 we moved many of our meetings to new venues and the Speaker Meetings are now held in the Catholic Parish Hall, an attractive venue in the centre of Newmarket, with a car park attached. This season has included a fascinating presentation from the Commonwealth Graves Commission through to a light-hearted finale in June when Stephen Amer sang sea shanties. His powerful renditions ended our year on a high!



For Christmas 2024 we had a special event from Stephen Ashworth, called “The Science of Santa” and in February there was a talk and demonstration by our well-known local artist, Jacquie Jones. The future programme for the remainder of 2015 is on our website under EVENTS.

BRUNCH

Judy Herridge

The BRUNCH Group meets at the Stable on the second Wednesday of the month, starting at 12.00 noon. There is no need to pre-book and we can have anything from a light snack to a full lunch. This is a social gathering with the benefit of no washing up! We look forward to seeing you at a future meeting.



HISTORY

Niddy Walpole

We have moved to a more comfortable venue at the Racing Centre. We still meet on the first Friday of the month at 2.30pm.

The presentations are of many, varied subjects, from the owners of Elveden Hall, Coco Chanel, a fashion icon, and the Royal Dynasty of the Stuarts. Please look on the History Group page on the website or the History section in the bi-monthly newsletter.

The members themselves did a presentation of their research of any male figure of their choice in June. Thank you to all of them for their hard work.

The group enjoyed Christmas lunch at the George and Dragon, Snailwell.



SCRABBLE

Janet Neville

We meet monthly on the second Monday of the month at the Racing Centre from 2.30 to 4.00pm. We have 12 members at the moment, but we would love more. We are a friendly mixed group and don't take it too seriously, learning new words from each other each month.



CRAFTS, COFFEE & COOK OFF

Stephanie Ellington

We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Racing Centre at 10.30 for Crafts and 11.15 for Cook Off.



At present 'Crafts' includes model-making and a range of handicraft skills including knitting, cross stitch and tapestry etc and expert advice is available for anyone



attempting such projects. We are hoping to expand this part of the sessions, maybe inviting guest speakers in the near future depending on

interest; so keep an eye on the Newmarket u3a website for further information.



We end each Cook Off meeting discussing the choice of recipe for our next month; our only rule is that we alternate sweet and savoury recipes month by month. The recipe is then circulated in advance to all

members who follow it to very varying degrees depending both on the availability of ingredients within their store cupboards and their individual taste. At the meetings then we taste the goodies, compare results and usually learn some very useful new techniques and time saving hints. Of course, there is also time for coffee and a good natter in between tastings.

Over the past twelve months as well as our customary New Year Quiz we have been pleased to welcome speakers on subjects ranging from Bulbs, Corms & Tubers to Poisonous Plants. We were given an insight into the origin and continued works of the National Garden Scheme, by the Cambridgeshire organiser. We held a successful plant sale which raised over £94 for group funds and made a return visit to the Porters Lodge Garden in Cavenham to see how the garden has developed as well as sampling their delicious cake once again. Clare Kenward came to give us a flower arranging demonstration and kindly allowed her efforts to be offered as raffle prizes. Unfortunately, the proposed coach outing in August to the Belton House, Estate and Gardens had to be cancelled but there will be a visit to Fullers Mill instead.



This is the last report from Rosemary and me as we are pleased to say that group members, Alistair Brown along with Richard and Margaret Webb have agreed to take over the running of the group from August this year. We wish them every success.

MARY PILFOLD-ALLEN

“From a Flicker Grew a Flame”

Shortlisted in the National U3A Essay Competition 2025

There are many learning opportunities in the U3A, including national competitions. We are delighted to tell you that **Mary Pilfold-Allen**, one of our Newmarket U3A members, was shortlisted in the **National u3a Essay Competition 2025**.

Congratulations to Mary.

20 submissions were shortlisted as outstanding by the judges from the 90 essays submitted under the title: ***Make the case for a person, policy, invention or idea having a positive impact on society***

Read Mary's essay on our website

My route into art started when I volunteered to be a 'sitter' for a portrait group. I enjoyed the experience and after faltering attempts at charcoal sketches, I bravely took the step of joining the group. I found, and still find, the process fascinating.

I wondered if anyone in the Newmarket U3A would be interested in forming a portrait group where my role would be administrator/member. I recognised that tutoring would be quite beyond me. A 'feeler' was put out in a newsletter, a number of people responded and it was decided to go ahead.

The first session of our fledgling Portrait Group was in September last year. We meet on the afternoon of the 4th Tuesday of each month in Ashley Pavilion.

The people in our group cover a wide range of portrait experience from little or none to experienced and talented portraitists. Most months we have 7 or 8 members sketching or painting our model.

We have managed to find, each month, a willing volunteer to sit for us, but I sense, for our second year, it might get more difficult. So – if you are able to help us out and are willing to spend an afternoon in very pleasant company with refreshments, the portrait group would be delighted.



FAMILY HISTORY

Bridget Kerle

The Family History group has now been running for just over a year. We have a core of friendly and interested members who meet and share experience, discuss issues and progress projects on how we can both research our own family history and also look at how we can preserve and pass on our results. Some of the topics which we explore at our meetings include:

- public and other research sources
- building family trees
- how do we store information (digitally or physically)
- what do we do with family photographs and other 'stuff'
- preserving family stories and heritage
- who might be interested in your project.

The aim is very much to support each other and to share experience. Some members of the group are highly experienced researchers and others are beginners looking to learn more. If you want some help or if you want to help others, everyone is welcome.

RUMMIKUB

Rose Baxter

Rummikub is a very popular game and it is easy to learn and fast moving. It is very similar to the card game Rummy but uses numbered tiles instead of cards. It combines luck, strategy and changes quickly, so every player has a



chance to win until the very end. We play on the fourth Tuesday of each month currently at Brampton Manor Care Home, so come along and join us for a social fun afternoon.

KATH GIFKINStakes a long view of her recent role

The years since the last yearbook seem have to have gone by in a flash.

There have been changes in the structure of the Third Age Trust to attract those with a wider range of specialist knowledge to the governing body. It is hoped that this will allow for better communication and advice to u3as such as ours.

The Executive committee is the bedrock of our u3a, dealing with all the nitty gritty details needed to ensure it functions well by keeping in touch with the Third Age Trust, making sure essential policies, insurances and licences are in place, rooms are available for meetings, bills are paid etc.

Our u3a has seen new Executive committee members who have found their own niche within the group, working alongside those who have been on the committee for a while. I think they will agree it's not quite as daunting as it looks on paper!

There have been fun times too. A trip to Cromer on a very cold and windy day last June may have put some off the East coast for a while! A much warmer visit to Stamford & Rutland Water was enjoyed this year. In between was the visit to the National Memorial Arboretum in May with members of other local U3As joining us. Our members had another chance to socialise at a Buffet lunch last September and as always, the Annual lunch in January, both last year and this, proved very popular.

We held a successful Coffee and Open Morning last September in the Memorial Hall. Group leaders put on informative displays about their groups, members of the Activities subcommittee supplied refreshments and the Publicity subcommittee put together display stands, posters and leaflets. Existing members came along for a coffee and chat, the public was invited, and several new members were recruited.

Busy times, but very rewarding. Thank you. *Kath Gifkins*

Camera group meets on the first Monday of the month at the Racing centre. The main business of our meetings is to judge the winning photo in our monthly competition. Members can enter up to two photos in every competition.

The winning photo is chosen by vote, and every month brings interesting and varied interpretations of that month's theme, which are discussed over coffee by the group, after voting.

The competition calendar, which is published on the U3A website consists of 12 subjects, suggested by the members and put into a series for the year by the group co-ordinators. The winning photo each month is published on the Camera group page of the website. *(See centre spread)*

We typically have around a dozen members at each meeting at the moment.

Because our meetings are on the first Monday, the bank holiday does mean we can't meet in May so we have run online competitions and may run a field trip in 2026.

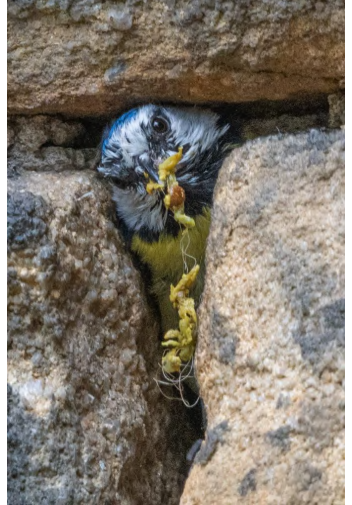


THE GALLERY: photographs from the Camera Group



LEFT: July 25
Richard Unwin
'Getting the Punts ready'

RIGHT: April '25
Bill Middleton
'Bluetit'



ABOVE: October '24 Kath Gifkins 'Harvest'

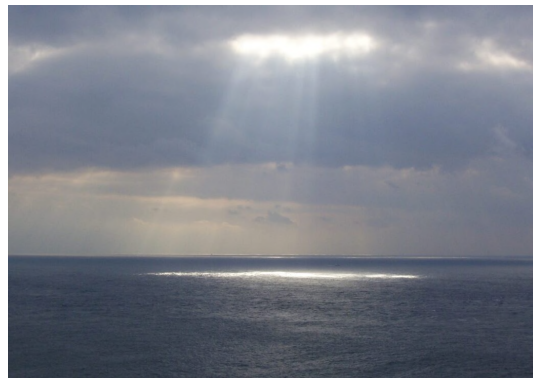
BELOW: June '25 Geraldine Cornwell



RIGHT: Dec. '24

Graham Briggs
'Beamish Museum'

BELOW: Sept '24
Pam Melbourne
'Sunbeam'



THE GALLERY: photographs from the Camera Group

CAPTIONS: TOP TO BOTTOM

Nov. '24: Andy Cogan 'Solway Firth Bike Trek'

June '24: Gordon Duthie 'Windermere'

May '24: Barry Coles 'Banded Demoiselle'

April '24: Geraldine Cornwell 'Humber Bridge'



COMPETITION TOPICS: 2024

January: Curves

February: What is this?

March: Black & White

April: Golden

May: Insects

June: Water

July: Garden

August: Wildlife

September: Sunbeams

October: Harvest

November: Vehicles

December: Open Door



COMPETITION TOPICS: 2025

January: Music

February: Monochrome

March: Shadows

April: Spring

May: Post Boxes

June: Ball Games

July: River Scene

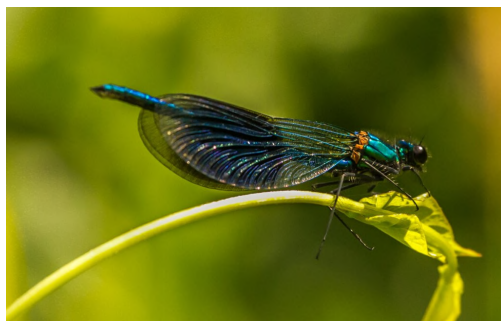
August: Thinking of the
planet

September: Texture

October: Wheels

November: Autumn

December: Chimneys



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: 2025

The annual AGM of Newmarket U3A was held on Monday. Complete details of the meeting and outcomes are on the website. Six members stood for the committee and were elected unopposed as our Executive Committee may consist of between five and 12 members. Roles are as set out below.

Chairman: Geraldine Cornwell

Vice Chairman: Tim Young

Secretary: Bridget Kerle

Treasurer: Di Angus-Smith

Membership Secretary: Di Angus-Smith

Group Liaison: Sarah McManus

Web Manager: Geraldine Cornwell

Venue Co-ordinator: Graham Briggs

Speaker Meetings Roger Worden

Newsletter editor Tim Young

Beacon and Workspace Admin Roger Worden



THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE PROJECT

For several years now, Newmarket U3A has celebrated Christmas in various ways, to the benefit of the local community. For years we supported the

Christmas Card Shop in the Stable and when this closed we adopted the Operation Christmas Child collection for disadvantaged children. But when support for this began to wane we joined in some of the Christmas Tree festivals in local churches. Moving on again, our



U3A struck out on its own to provide festive decorations in other areas of Newmarket. We are only limited by the number of volunteers prepared to come along and decorate the trees we provide. We hope you will join us in December.



ANTIQUES

Richard Rigby



The Antiques Group has had a very interesting year thanks to David Palmer. He has again given us an insight into auctioneering and buying and selling at local markets. He is in demand as a freelance auctioneer and he and his wife Mary have a stall selling bric-a-brac on Cambridge Market on Mondays, as well as showing and dealing elsewhere in England.

His supply and description of objects at our sessions keeps the audience interested throughout. The interplay between him and our members is a unique way of discussing and handling unusual acquisitions.

Members are also encouraged to bring along objects for advice and information as to their background and value.

David cannot always attend these sessions due to clashes with professional assignments. Where possible he supplies a back-up. This year we had a very interesting talk by the owner of an auctioneering business in Dereham.

DISCUSSION

John Herring

Discussion group meetings are held at the Racing Centre in the afternoon on the 2nd Tuesday of the month.

We don't have a fixed programme of topics to discuss, preferring to respond to current events and interests members wish to discuss each month over a hot drink.



The Art Appreciation Group has had a successful year, with a number of new members. It has also been very pleasing that group members are increasingly contributing to what is going on, such as ideas for meetings, information-sharing about art events locally, giving talks, and helping with the practicalities of organising trips. This makes for a lively group, so I do hope it will continue: many thanks to you all.

We have a lunch for our December meeting, but apart from that, our activities in the past year followed the previous pattern of monthly meetings, with talks and presentations especially during the Winter, when most of the



galleries do not have special exhibitions, and then visits to local museums and galleries in the Spring and Summer. We use car-share arrangements for this, so this is my chance to thank all those who have given lifts this year. We visited the Fitzwilliam Museum, the Gainsborough House in Sudbury and the Higgins Museum in Bedford.

We are looking forward to next year, which is already being planned.

CARPET BOWLS

Jean Bell et al

Brian, Lorraine, Mike and myself have been running the U3A Bowls Club now for 2 years and it's still going well with between 26-30 members, if you are not aware we have moved the venue which is now at the Racing Centre, it's a lot bigger and we have the use of 3 mats. If any of you are interested we meet on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 10.30, come along and have a go. It is £1.50. for members plus £1 for coffee/tea and biscuits.

We would also like to thank the members who help to get mats out etc and give us all the support we get, it's a great help. Thank you.

See you at the next bowls group meeting.



WALKING

Rosemary Foreman

The walking group continues to thrive and I'm very grateful to Kath and Annie for leading most of the walks, with thanks also to Thelma and John for helping out at other times.

Over the past year, walks have included round Soham, Fordham, Great Thurlow, Ickworth Park, Stetchworth, Borough Green and Wicken Fen, with lunch at the various nearby pubs!

We meet at 10.30 am on the first Wednesday of each month.

If you would like to join in (usually 3-4 miles) and are not currently on this mailing list, please let me know so I can notify you of the planned activities.

Our re-started Bridge Club has been going since October 2022 and we played in the Exning Road Club until last March at which stage we had 8-12 regular players, i.e. two or three tables of four. We moved to playing at Brampton



Manor in April 2024 and the number of players initially stayed much the same after we restarted last September. However, the number of players dropped markedly since Christmas, and we've recently had only 5-7 players. This means one table of four with other players sitting out or having to jostle places from one table to the other.

We stopped for the summer in early June and there is some doubt if the Bridge Group will restart in September. Returning to the ERC is no longer an option so we might consider other venues or taking on beginners again. I'm not sure what we can do to change the way Jenny and I run the club but we're open to ideas including handing over to someone else!

I will see if there's sufficient support to restart. I have about a dozen players on my email list who rarely or never come. Perhaps these 'sleepers' might have some good ideas!

Our group is small, but beautifully formed!

We've been going for about a year and a half now, and although none of us have managed to produce a best seller yet or clinched a deal for the film rights of any of our writings, we're all happy to put pen to paper every month for the entertainment of our friends in the group.

During the last year, probably like many groups, we've been beset by members being unable to attend due to illness and various hospital appointments. Isn't it great getting older? Your days seem to be spent dealing with medical concerns, but I suppose it's better than the alternative.

For those of us who do manage to attend, we've had many enjoyable pieces of writing introduced to us.

As usual, we suggest a prompt for a subject to write about for the following month, but it's not compulsory and some of our members bring along their own works they'd like to share with the group, and this is always welcome.

In the last year, we've welcomed Rosemary to our group, and she has

produced some very interesting and entertaining writing for the group.

Going back to our problems with absences due to illness etc, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Margaret Jocelyn for stepping into the breach for me when I've been unable to attend the meetings. Thank you very much Margaret, I know quite a few of the members appreciate our meetings being able to go ahead thanks to you.

We still have room for a few more budding writers if anyone would like to come along and join us. We range from complete beginners through to a few published writers and everything in between, so there's a place for everyone, regardless of skill or talent. There's no judgement, only encouragement.

We currently meet at Brampton Manor on the third Tuesday of the month, from 2.15, and welcome any new members who'd like to join us.



The MOTO group have enjoyed various activities over the past year. In September we attended Kirtling church Friends' Day, where we enjoyed a very interesting talk by Rev Simon Talbot, Honorary Canon at Ely cathedral, followed by a delicious tea. Other events have included lunch at Scotsdales at Horningsea, afternoon tea at Fordham and a visit to Anglesey Abbey to look at the snowdrops, aconites and other Spring flowers, followed by lunch at Quy. We also visited Chippenham Park in March, where several of us also enjoyed lunch. In June we once again joined up with the Garden Group for a visit to The Porter's Lodge at Cavenham, which was a very successful and enjoyable afternoon.



In July, a group of us joined Cheveley Evergreens for their annual visit to Felixstowe and on 17 September we will again be joining with the Garden Group for a visit to Anglesey Abbey. On 4th October we will be visiting Kirtling church for their Friends' Day, when the speaker will be Miles Dodd, speaking about misericords of England and Europe, followed by tea.

It would seem that our members enjoy any visit which includes lunch or tea but I would also like to arrange other visits so any suggestions would be welcome.

MUSIC APPRECIATION

Richard Unwin

The Music Appreciation group meets at the Racing Centre on the third Friday of every month. Three of our members take it in turn to present a 75-to-80-minute video of recorded music using the audio visual equipment in the Moller Room. Mid-meeting we have a break for tea/coffee and a chat.

We present a varied selection of classical music of all ages and genres - orchestral, instrumental, chamber, operatic, ballet, etc. We aim to cater for all tastes, mixing the popular with something new. Our presentations are compiled from the vast range of excellent performances freely available on the internet.

U3A members are very welcome to come along for a taster. Just sit back and enjoy the music! I would like to thank Mike Jocelyn and Judy Herridge for their enthusiastic help in running the group and to Tara and her staff at the Racing Centre for preparing the Moller room for our meetings.

REALM OF BOOKS

Sabine Deering

In September Stephanie and I took over the helm from Margaret Jocelyn who had been running this group for a good number of years. This 'job share' seems to work very well. The group meets at 2.30 pm on the fourth Friday of each month at the Racing Centre to discuss the book of the month.

Books are selected once a year by group members and are predominantly, but not exclusively, fiction. The list of books is available on the website. We currently read and discuss one book per month

At our monthly meetings each member is invited to share their thoughts and appreciation of the book read that month. The most lively discussions take place when there are very differing views of the book. It is always interesting to hear other people's interpretation and reaction to a specific book and to see how one text can be interpreted in so many different ways.

Tea and coffee are provided, and new members are always welcome.

In company with a number of other groups, we moved, very smoothly, from Exning Road Club to the Racing Centre, where the facilities are excellent and the staff most helpful.

In recent years we have broadened the number of presenters which has had the effect of widening the range of topics presented to the group. We have used this new scheme over the last year, David Soanes and Tim Young leading alternative months' meetings, with two guest presenters adding variety in style and topics during the year.

We are very grateful to Niddy Walpole and John Wallace. Niddy's theme was 'The Influence of Women in Wartime', while John focussed on 'WWI Vehicles and their Influences in Wartime'. Both Niddy and John have agreed to contribute to next year's programme. David's five

presentations ranged across subjects such as the evolution of weapons and modern tunnelling methods and machines. Tim as ever, stuck to flight. He tries to link the December talk to the festive season, in 2024 talking on Christopher Columbus and his ship the Santa Maria – which sank on Christmas Day 1492!

Looking forward, we have asked our group members two questions. Firstly, would anyone else like to choose a topic and do a presentation for us and secondly, if they wouldn't wish to make the presentation, would they like to put forward suggestions for the regular presenters to develop and present. Some useful and interesting suggestions have already been received.

As a result of the withdrawal of the 'Gredley Bus', by the Gredley Trust, we have had no group outings this

year. These had been a valuable and interesting addition to the programme and are an area of our activity that we look forward to developing during the next year.



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