Neston u3a Bulletin

November 2026

What's happening in November and December 2026:

Julian is very keen to start his new **Creative Writing** group, which will be at his home. He has written a few short stories himself so I am sure will be happy to help anyone new to the idea.

I believe some of you may have already told Lesley you are interested in this but I would be grateful if you can confirm with me also and if anyone else wants to join please let me know so we can compile a list, set up the first date and give venue details.

The **Genealogy** group also seems to have some interest so again, please let me know if this interests you so we can start a list of prospective members.

Finally I gather some members are interested in having a **Stroller** group - could you let me know if this interests you and also if you would be willing to lead one?

Many thanks, Tina
newgroupssecretary@nestonu3a.org.uk

The walking group saw an interesting shed on the medium walk this week. Guess where we were? Clue- it was on the Wirral.

If you would like to join us, we go out on the first Tuesday of the month for a local 3-4 miles walk, with longer walks on the third Wednesday during the summer.

Rosemary walking@nestonu3a.org.uk



The sign on the 'shed'reads DETOX

Poetry and Prose Groups 1 & 2 Visit to The Lady Lever Art Gallery

On 8th October two literature groups visited The Lady Lever Art Gallery in Port Sunlight for a guided talk on a selection of paintings inspired by literary texts. Our guide, Simon, was extremely knowledgeable, not only about the artists, but their mode of painting and the literary connections of the chosen works.

We enjoyed, for example, the delights of Dante Gabriel Rosetti's 'The Blessed Damozel', (the subject of his very own poem); 'The Beguiling of Merlin' by Edward Burne Jones (based on Arthurian legend); 'The Black Brunswicker' by John Everett Millais, which features a soldier, who is about to depart for the Napoleonic wars, embracing a young lady. The model for the female was none other than Charles Dickens' daughter Kate Perugini. (Apparently, the two people never actually posed together for the artist, as this would have been deemed inappropriate!) We also saw 'The Falls of the Clyde' by J M W Turner, which is based on the poem by Campbell. The poet's description of the waterfall sharply contrasts to the roar of Niagara:

'His voice appalls the wilderness

Approaching there we feel

A solemn, deep melodiousness

That needs no louder peel.'

One attendee, Diane, (whose idea it was for the visit) kindly provided us with handouts about the links to the Yeats poem 'Leda and the Swan' with the sculpture at the gallery. We also enjoyed the temporary exhibition of May Morris' work (the daughter of artist William Morris).

It was a most enjoyable and informative trip.

Belinda Ludlow



DONATED BICYCLES

Thanks to your generosity and that of other groups in this area, I was able to deliver 10 donated bikes today to ALM in Liverpool. They have over 700 men, women and children on their books. All are in need of food, clothing and a warm, dry bed. Your generosity will help the adults find work, access Services and help the children with meeting friends, schooling and just enjoying life outside. That's not too much to ask, is it?

Brian brian2009@btinternet.com

The Lunch Club is over subscribed so if anyone fancies running Lunch Club Two, see Kenny or Shelagh at the next monthly meeting for advice and encouragement.

The current leader of the **Exploring Music Group** is having to step down for health reasons.

Apparently there is no one in the current group able to take over from her- is there anyone in the wider membership who feels they can take over this role? If so please contact me as it would be a shame for the group to fold.

Don't forget all the other potential new groups available as a result of our open day. Let me or Lesley know if you are interested in joining them or even starting a new group!

Best wishes
Tina Fox

(blog produced by NCYC on behalf of Neston Crown Green Bowling Club)

Thank you to Ian Norris for content information

For more than a century, crown green bowling has been part of the fabric of Neston life. Today, however, Neston Crown Green Bowling Club faces a very real risk of closure unless they can attract new members and rebuild the club for the future.

The club, based at Stanney Fields Park, traces its roots back to the early 1900s when bowling became established alongside what is now Neston Civic Hall. Generations of local residents have enjoyed the game here, creating friendships, competition, and community spirit that have endured for decades.

Sadly, membership has declined in recent years; they are now down to around 20 players (with some currently unable to play) and field just one team in the Birkenhead Veterans League, where each match consists of ten singles games. While their dedicated members continue to keep the club going, they urgently need new bowlers to join them over the next two to three years to rebuild the club and ensure that this valuable community asset survives.

Many people think bowling is only for older generations, but nothing could be further from the truth. Crown green bowling is a sport for all ages, abilities, and mobilities. It provides gentle physical activity, improves balance and coordination, supports mental wellbeing and offers a fantastic opportunity to spend time outdoors in the fresh air.

Just as importantly, bowling brings people together. In a world where social isolation is becoming increasingly common, the club offers friendship, laughter, and a sense of belonging. Whether you are retired, working part-time, looking for a new hobby, or simply want to meet new people, you will be warmly welcomed.

The Stanney Fields Green is open from mid-March, with the main bowling season running from late March or early April until early September. The home league matches currently take place on Wednesday afternoons, and many members also enjoy informal social bowling on Sunday mornings.

Bowling is one of the most affordable sporting and social activities in the area. Membership not only enables players to participate in club activities and competitions but also allows members to use the bowling green whenever it is available throughout the season. For far less than the cost of a monthly gym membership, members can enjoy regular exercise, fresh air, friendship, and access to a wonderful community facility.

If you have never played before, don't worry. The club will provide training, guidance, and support for new and inexperienced players. You do not even need your own bowls to get started. All they ask is that you wear flat, non-heeled footwear, such as trainers, when using the green.

Beyond league matches and practice sessions, the club also hosts an annual competition for its silver cup, providing a friendly challenge and a chance to celebrate the season together.
We know there are many people in Neston who care deeply about preserving local heritage and strengthening community life. This is an opportunity to do both. By joining the club, encouraging a friend or family member to try bowling, or simply helping the club spread the word, you can play a part in securing the future of one of Neston's longest-standing sporting traditions.

The ask is not to save a bowling club but to help save a piece of Neston's history, a place that promotes health, wellbeing, friendship, and community connection.



By attracting the next generation of bowlers now, Neston Crown Green Bowling Club can continue to thrive for many years to come.

Come along, give it a try, help keep this wonderful local tradition alive – and ensure that it prospers and thrives for years to come.

For more information please contact Neston Crown Green Bowling Club on 07579765585.





Members enjoying themselves at the u3a Summer Lunch at the Royal Oak



If you've been thinking about a Masters degree, now could be the right time to take the next step and study with a world top 50 university.

Applications are now open for 2027 masters programmes at the University of Edinburgh. With over 400 programmes to choose from, including one of the UK's largest selections of online masters, we have options to suit a wide range of interests and ambition.

Explore our online masters

Course Spotlight: Learning for Sustainable Futures

Free short online course

Updated for 2026, this five-week course explores how education can help address sustainability at local and global levels.

From now until 9 November, you'll learn alongside a global community and interact with experts from the University of Edinburgh and Learning for Sustainability Scotland. You'll explore current global issues, consider how we can take action personally and locally, and think about how to apply what you learn into your own context.

Join for free on Coursera

Explore **400+ short courses** across a wide range of subjects, including online, free and low-cost options designed to fit around your life.

Explore University of Edinburgh Short Courses - coursera.org

Happy learning and best wishes,

The University of Edinburgh
NB: I did a couple of free Coursera courses during lockdown and they were very interesting. One of them was 'The Science of Happiness' – good fun and easy to follow. The other was Philosophy and it gave me brain ache but I did learn a few things from it – sadly, I can't remember what it was that I learned! Shelagh



Our u3a Secretary and the inimitable Beryl having a great time at the Summer Lunch.

Don't forget that bookings are being taken for the Christmas Lunch in December. See Shelagh at the Monthly Speaker Meeting in October or November

Old Grumpies

First Thursday of the month, 2- 3.30pm - Meeting at the Hinderton Arms, Neston.
10 members only.

The Group discusses some specific aspect or sometimes general free for all subjects. No skills are needed beyond having an opinion and the willingness to voice it, to listen respectfully, and to respond politely but occasionally passionately and with humour. All conducted over half a pint of course.

Terri Gray theresecatherine31@hotmail.com

Inside every older person is a younger person wondering what happened.

Terry Pratchett

You don't stop laughing when you grow old, you grow old when you stop laughing.

George Bernard Shaw

A Soldier's Tale.

In September 1954, having just left school after A-levels at aged 19 I was called up to serve in the armed forces to do a period of 2 years National Service. It was decided that I should serve in the army in the Royal Corps of Signals.

So from my home in Bristol I was sent to Catterick Camp in Yorkshire for a 4-week intense period of basic military training. This entailed learning how to march, drill and parade on a square. Also, I learnt the basics of a .303 rifle and Sten gun - how to dismantle and re-assemble, as well as firing them on designated firing ranges.

At the end of the 4-week period there was a grandiose Passing- out Parade, including the Band of the Royal Corps of Signals in full flow. Following this we were chosen to learn one of the various trades carried out by the Corps: e.g. radio mechanic, despatch rider, Morse sending and receiving.

I was chosen to become a Special Operator, which entailed learning to receive and write down Morse code signals sent at high speeds. For this I was sent to a Wireless Training camp at Garat's Hay, Woodhouse Eaves in rural Leicestershire. It was about 5 miles from Loughborough and 8 from Leicester. In the billet I was assigned to, there were about 16 of us at various stages of training. Despite this we were all still required to carry out basic chores of billet and toilet cleaning etc. as well as assembling for early morning parades on the square and marching off to the mess or training rooms.

The days were long, beginning at around 6 a.m. and most of us were ready for bed by about 9pm. However, there was one fellow who regularly left camp in the evening several times a week and came back at around midnight. This was allowed as long as he carried out his military duties and was back in camp by midnight - which I presume he was. Apparently, this guy went off to sing in local night clubs and working men's clubs in Loughborough and district. I can remember a colleague of his getting him to give a rendering of 'Hold My Hand' which was Number 1 in the Hit Parade at the time.

I was only in that billet for about 2 weeks and was then moved out to another and thought no more of it. At the time I never knew this guy's name but I now believe him to be Arnold George Dorsey, aged 18, from Leicester. Know who it was?

Phil Cartwright

Pub Grub

It was a relief to be able to email this column to the editor this time because, for a time, we lost our internet connection and, to make matters worse, we're with Sky. If you ring them up, you're patched through to a Bombay call centre where you find yourself trying to talk to a young Indian girl who has such a strong accent, communication is well nigh impossible. I have just been listening to an hour-long, long-distance call that consisted mainly of Celia repeating: 'I can't hear what you're saying!' Eventually I was dispatched to get my cheque book and bank card because it appears that we have to pay £24 for a new Sky box which would arrive, followed by an engineer to fit it. But, guessing that such a promise would never be kept, I went through all the tangled wiring on my desk, pushing all the plugs in hard and, as if by magic, all the lights on the Sky box came on again and everything reappeared on screen. For someone like me who hates all technology, this was quite miraculous. At the time of writing, we're still waiting for a Sky engineer to arrive!

I have been conducting a survey of local pubs, specifically their Christmas Day lunch offerings. Christmas Day lunch is something normally we don't have to think about because we always follow the same routine. This involves driving to Liverpool and being faced with an enormous mountain of food on the plate in Celia's daughter's kitchen. All those present are scousers so it's like trying to follow a foreign language. Oh and there's a huge dog that shows too much interest in your trousers. Only this year there's family illness so they've cancelled Christmas.

Our immediate thought after digesting this sad news was to join some friends who go every year on Christmas Day to the Hinderton Arms even though they charge £86 for lunch. Sorry, we're full. Next we tried The Seven Stars at Thornton Hough. They're fully booked too. The Yacht tell us Christmas Day is the one day in the year when they shut. The Royal Oak in Little Neston is open on Christmas Day but not for food. Finally, I had a brainwave. Hotels must surely stay open on Christmas Day for meals and, when I checked online, The Tudor Rose happily took my booking. Just to make sure, I printed out the booking so that, when we turn up only to be told: 'We're full', I can wave my paper at them which boldly states: 'We look forward to seeing you, Michael Grumett. Your table is reserved for Friday 25 December at 12.30'.

So the results of the survey are as follows: Christmas Day diners book the same pub again every year, a year ahead; other pubs give it a miss completely presumably because of the cost of employing staff on that day. In other words, you've no chance of a Christmas day pub lunch, even if you can afford it and unless you book a year ahead. Or go to a hotel. And the prize for the most expensive Christmas Day lunch: The Red Fox at £150 a head!

But now to The Seven Stars at Thornton Hough for Shelagh's monthly U3A lunch. This has been one of our favourite pubs for many years and we are always guaranteed a warm welcome from the landlord Carl and his wife Paula. It's in a delightful old village that's in the Doomsday Book but much changed by Lord Leverhulme, who used to live down the road. That's why, for instance, it has two churches – of different denominations - within a few yards of each other. So not everything here looks as old as you might think. The Seven Stars never changes though and the food is as good as ever. I had the fish pie which was excellent. It is quiet: only three other diners when we were there and the service was quietly efficient for the dozen of us. Thanks again, Shelagh, for a lovely lunch.

At the time of writing, no Sky engineer has called.

Michael Grumett



Members enjoying the
Neston u3a Summer Lunch

NESTON U3A THEATRE OUTING

STRANGERS ON A TRAIN

A gripping thriller at Theatr Clwyd.

Would you like to join fellow Neston U3A members for an exciting afternoon at the theatre?

THE STORY

Two strangers meet on a train. Charles Bruno suggests the perfect crime: two murders, with each man killing someone for the other. Guy Haines thinks it is a joke — but Bruno is deadly serious! What follows is a chilling tale of obsession, manipulation, guilt and suspense. A great choice for anyone who enjoys a gripping thriller.

EVENT DETAILS

Date: Wednesday 17 February 2027
Time: 2.30pm matinee
Venue: Theatr Clwyd, Mold
Ticket price: £33.50 per person

WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME?

It would be lovely to get a group of Neston U3A members together for an enjoyable afternoon out. If you are interested, please let us know so that we can assess numbers and explore arranging a group booking. Come along and enjoy an afternoon of theatre, thrills and good company!
Show details and booking information: www.theatrclwyd.com/event/strangers-on-a-train

Lesley Hobbs
publicitysecretary@nestonu3a.org.uk



The Neston U3A Earth & Beyond group and Karl Gray, our volunteer guide (in orange jacket).



Dr Tim Astrop, the palaeontologist, waxing lyrical about the fossils and the dig.

Earth & Beyond trip to Stori Brymbo

On Tuesday 29th September, 12 intrepid members of the Earth & Beyond Group went to the Stori Brymbo experience in the suburbs of Wrexham. Stori Brymbi tells the story of how coal was formed over 300m years ago or so from three major plant groups, the seed ferns, Horsetails and the Lycopods. Seed ferns are no longer with us, but there are still examples of Horsetails and Lycopods growing in Britain. Nowadays, these species are relatively small but in the geological past they produced substantive trees.

Thereafter, we learned, an iron works was built on the site and was one of the first of its kind, fuelling the industrial revolution. There is also a major, important geological dig within the site looking at fossils (plants, millipedes, dragonflies and fish).

We started with an informative film and then a guided tour by Karl Gray, an ex-Geology teacher, who volunteers at Stori Brymbo. He told us the main geological story and wowed us with fossil specimens. Then we went into the main geological dig, which currently covers about 30% of the potential fossil bed on the site. There, Dr Tim Astrop, the site paleontologist gave us a talk and showed us fossil examples of Lycopod stems and Horsetails.

We then enjoyed a great lunch in the café. Thanks to Derick Cotton for organising the trip, excellent as usual.



The Dig, showing protruding stems of fossil Lycopods and Horsetails

September Open Day

Another very successful event







Don't forget, if you don't want your photo to appear in the newsletter or on our u3a website, please avoid people lurking with mobile phones or tell the photographer that you don't want them to take your photo.

The North West Region has received a request to ask u3a members if they are willing to participate in a psychological research opportunity.

Liz Broom, an MPhil/PhD student at Wrexham University, is seeking people to participate in her research study, "**Thought Style Impact on Stress Perception and Coping.**" If your u3a is willing and permitted by your privacy policy, please share this invitation with your members.
There is also a post on the North West Region u3a website see;

https://northwestregion.u3asite.uk/medical-research-opportunity/

The study explores how people think about and perceive stress, as well as the coping strategies they use. It has received ethical approval from the Wrexham University Research Ethics Committee on **9 February 2026** and has been designed around the principles of **respect and avoiding harm**.

Participants must:

- Be aged **18 or over**
- Use **English as one of their primary languages**

Participation involves:

- Completing an online questionnaire taking approximately **10 minutes**
- Optionally taking part in a follow-up interview, either online or face-to-face

Participants may stop at any time, skip questions, and withdraw their data within two weeks of taking part. The study provides information about consent, data management, GDPR, and participants' rights. Data will be anonymised and stored securely in line with Wrexham University's data-protection policies.

The research findings will contribute to Liz's PhD thesis and may also be presented at academic conferences or published in peer-reviewed journals.

The study information and questionnaire are available here:

Access the study(opens in a new tab or window)

Liz can be contacted at 19005509@mail.glyndwr.ac.uk.

From Mark Bradley
NWR Web Manager

It's paradoxical that the idea of living a long life appeals to everyone,
but the idea of getting old doesn't appeal to anyone.
Andy Rooney

Everything you need to know about your U3A is on our website

nestonu3a.org.uk

Speaker Meetings

October 29th – Julie Kershaw, Liverpool tour guide, will speak about historic pubs of Liverpool.

November 28th - David Casement will speak about Thomas Brassey, Victorian engineer.

No speaker meeting in December but the Christmas lunch at the Royal Oak will be Thursday 10th December. The price is £20 for a 3 course meal and, if you've been before, you'll know it's excellent value. You can book and pay by bank transfer on line or at the next meeting by cash or cheque. See Shelagh on the way in or email shelaghnugent45@gmail.com
Book early to avoid disappointment as places are limited.

IF

If you think you are beaten, you are.
If you think you dare not, you don't.
If you'd like to win, but think you can't
It's almost certain you won't.
If you think you'll lose, you've lost.
For out of the world we find
Success begins with a person's will –
It's all in the state of mind.
If you think you're outclassed, you are.
You've got to think high to rise,
You've got to be sure of yourself before
You can ever win a prize.
Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger, faster man
But sooner or later the man who wins
Is the one who Thinks He Can!
Anonymous.
Supplied by Doreen Higgins.

Editor's Bit

It seems to be quite an exciting time for our little u3a, with new groups popping up and people trying new things. Brilliant. That's what we're all about so please support your group leaders and help out where you can. The tea and biscuit team are always glad of a bit of extra help, even if it's just taking your dirty cups back! I'm always guilty of forgetting to do this, so apologies to the tea elves.

Do you listen to Radio Four? They've brought back Room 101. (Idea taken from George Orwell's 1984. If you haven't read it you probably should.) Room 101 on the radio is where people put things that really irritate them and that they want to be rid of. So how about we have a Room 101 section where you can all nominate things, people, situations that you want to see the back of. Here's my suggestion to be going on with – Christmas that starts in September. They've got a decorated Christmas tree in Argos (in Sainsburys) already. It's not right. It's not decent. It's obscene. It's mega irritating. I'm not a practicing Christian but whatever happened to Gentle Jesus meek and mild? Nobody cares about the Christmas message any more, it's all about how much money people can be persuaded to spend. Well, count me out. I don't mind a bit of feasting and merry making to celebrate the Winter Solstice (see you in the Royal Oak December 10th) but I think we should all just have a bit more respect for the sentiment of the season. We've spent a few Christmases in Spain and it's brilliant. It doesn't kick off till Christmas Eve, when everybody goes to Midnight Mass. Then they have a nice lunch on Christmas Day, lovely bit of fish or something, no poor mass produced factory turkeys (and no extra charge because it's a holiday, just normal price) and that's it, done. Very civilized. And the children sit nicely at the table and eat all manner of squiggly squids and things. No running around irritating people, no special children's menu, they eat proper food and enjoy it. We Brits (not me) have got a lot to learn.

I feel better for that!

The next newsletter will probably be in January so you've got plenty of time to think about what you're going to send me. It's much more interesting if you share your stories, thoughts, ideas. It'll save me twining on at length as well, for which you should be truly grateful.
Best wishes and Happy Winter, get the themal undies out.

Shelagh
shelaghnugent45@gmail.com
Arnold George Dorsey turned into Englebert Humberdinck.