



The Chairman's Diary

Well, we certainly saw out the old year out in style with our now-traditional Christmas lunch at The Royal Oak in Little Neston, this time ending with carols arranged by Singing Group leader Celia, accompanied on the keyboard by the group's resident accompanist Tim. It was a full house as usual with the pub team coping in their usual efficient way.

It was great to see so many members getting together for a final festive gathering of the year.

This year sees a major change for us as we settle into our new monthly speaker meeting place at the Royal British Legion hall. As you will all know by now, the battle to save our traditional meeting place, the Civic Hall, has been lost. When Neston Council failed to support a funding bid, the writing was on the wall and it was announced that the Civic Hall would have to close on March 31st. The hall will then be handed back to Cheshire West and Chester Council who, it has been suggested, will sell the site to a developer who will build flats on it, having demolished this historic building. So it's all over bar the shouting, as they say, but there was certainly some of that as I experienced myself! With the Glegg Arms being threatened by Premier Inns in Heswall, is there no end to the destruction of historic buildings?

Our position as a U3A is that we have had to make contingency plans as all the groups who used the Civic Hall here will be looking for alternative venues now. The committee decided that the Legion hall was a better alternative than the Town Hall or the URC hall. It has better access for disabled members, having a large, free car park and no entrance steps. The speaker facilities and tea-making arrangements are better in a downstairs room that offers more comfortable seating. What's not to like, you might ask? However, some members have told me they think it is claustrophobic and not big enough. I say it's comfortable, cosy and can accommodate the numbers now attending the monthly meetings. Anyway, it's booked until the May AGM when we can discuss the situation further. Until then, I hope you keep coming to the monthly meetings as we have some great speakers lined up.

Happy New Year! Michael Grumett

History Group

We meet on the last Monday of the month 2-4pm in Neston Library. This month's meeting is on Monday 27th January. Members present a short item they have researched on a specific topic. We are currently looking at postwar Europe, choosing countries to speak about. New members are not expected to contribute immediately. So no pressure. Just come and listen to the talks and contribute when you can.

Exploring Music

The first session of the New Year is on Monday 13th January 2-4pm. These sessions are run by Celia, a classically-trained musician, and concentrate on a particular period or composer with musical examples. They are held at Celia's house: 4 Turrocks Close, Little Neston CH64 0UD.

Thanks to all those who took part in the raffle at the Christmas lunch. We made £10 profit for Neston u3a funds.

Kenny Bird

55 people attended the Christmas lunch. How come Kenny didn't sell 55 tickets? Maybe you don't like whisky (the raffle prize) but you could have forked out a measly £1 and, if you won, surely it would have made a nice pressie for somebody? Kenny works hard to make the raffle attractive and the whole point of buying a ticket is to swell our u3a coffers. Nobody's asking you to dig deep – but £1? Neston u3a costs more to run than you might imagine. See the treasurer's report. If anyone has suggestions for suitable raffle prizes that would prompt more ticket sales, please let us know.
Shelagh

From Peter Bolderson

'We trained hard - but it seemed that every time we were beginning to form up into teams, we would be reorganised. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by reorganising, and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralisation.'

From Petronii Arbitri Satyricon, AD66, attributed to Gaius Petronius.

North West Region of U3As



Registered Charity No: 1159091

invite applications for the 2025 Summer School

Residential Summer School Tues 12th August – Friday 15th August At Manchester Metropolitan University, M15 6GX

The Metropolitan University is located in the centre of Manchester and less than 20 minutes' walk from Oxford Road Railway Station. The campus has modern facilities, student en-suite rooms with Wi-Fi access. There will be a quiz on the first evening and a "Gala Dinner" on the third and final evening. Speakers will also attend on the second and third evening.

Full Board Residential Delegate: £430. (+£10 car parking charge if applicable; +£25 field trips (2) surcharge for archaeology, and £15 field trip surcharge for British artists courses) We include full board for 3 nights, including dinner on 12th August, breakfast, lunch and dinner on 13th August, breakfast, lunch and gala dinner on 14th August, and breakfast on 15th August. Also, tea and coffee refreshments on each day.

Non-Residential Day Delegate: £215 (+parking and field trip surcharge if applicable) includes lunches, teas and coffees, excludes breakfast daily and dinner on Tuesday and Wednesday but does include the gala dinner on 14th August. Accommodation is available nearby in the Manchester city centre.

An Application form (**available online at northwestregion.u3asite.uk**) must be completed by post or email, Payment can be either by bank transfer (North West Region of U3A's, Lloyds Bank sort code 30-90-16, account 00197002 quoting name and post code) or by cheque (payable to North West Region of U3A's)

£100 DEPOSIT (£50 non residents) PAYABLE UPON APPLICATION; BALANCE BY 12 MAY 2025

*queries should be directed to Alan Hough or Neil Stevenson at
alanough1949@gmail.com; neil.stevenson@beacon.u3a.org.uk*

Post to 8 Salwick Close, Wigan, Gtr Manchester. WN3 6RE

The 8 courses on offer are:-

Archaeology: "Magical Minerals and Twisted Yarns";

Introduction to Ancient Egypt;

Literature: "I have something to say" (Gaskell, Spring, Winterson)

Art Appreciation: "A Pot- Pourri"

Art challenges: "Significance of Colour"

Uzbekistan: Heart of the Silk Road

Folk Music

Intermediary Ukulele

Full course synopses available separately (and on north west site).

Antiques and Collectables

The group rounded off another successful year with a quiz. Lyn, as usual, produced a set of excellent questions and the attached photo shows the winning team – The Smarties.

The sad news was that Barbara Lewis, a long standing and very active member, died just after Christmas. Our thoughts go out to her family and friends.

Sorry, the group is full but I'm happy to help someone set up another group

Liz (Mars)





Members enjoying their Christmas Lunch



Poetry and Prose group 3

Hello Neston U3A.

Hope you had a lovely December holiday. Poetry and Prose Group 3 enjoyed poems and prose extracts on the subject of CELEBRATION and are now looking forward to a full programme for 2025; starting in January with a celebratory lunch at The Woodcote in Hooton.

In case you don't recognise us in our Christmas disguises (for which we thank - I think - Belinda!) We are L – R : Vicky, Sue, Pauline, Valerie, Lesley, Belinda (we missed Liz and Diane).

We always enjoy our 2nd Thursday morning of the month and have said how uplifting we find it and I would always encourage a little poetry in everyone's life. The variety and scope of the writing that Group members find to read is truly astonishing and I've been newly introduced to so much quality literature despite a lifetime of reading. Although this Group is full, if you too would like to appreciate more literature, I would be very happy to help anyone who is interested in setting up their own Group.

Lesley Sutherland - My email address is Lesleypet@aol.com or 07745388487



Meeting Famous People!

I was interested in the article in a previous newsletter about a member meeting famous people and I told Shelagh about my experiences as Chief Executive of the Vegetarian Society (a national charity then based in Altrincham). She encouraged me to write about my own experiences so here goes!

I joined the Society in 1994 and continued in the role until 2006 when I left to move to Scotland to run another charity. I knew it would be hard work as the previous CEOs seemed to have little management experience but I did not realise it would lead to my meeting many famous people.

I believe the first celebrity I met was Heather Small (M People) as she supported National Vegetarian Week the first year I joined the Society. As I was not a fan I was not too impressed by this but much more so by the next celebrity, Sir Paul McCartney, as he and Linda had agreed to be the Society's patrons. Sadly I was unable to meet Linda as she was unavailable the day my Chair and I travelled to London to meet Paul but he was very friendly and pleased to meet a fellow scouser!



They also sent a special video of the two of them (which I still have) to show at our upcoming AGM. Paul narrated our latest video “Devour the Earth” for us and I met him on a number of occasions after that. Sadly I never got to meet Linda who died in 1998 though I was privileged to get an invite to her funeral.

In 2001 we hosted our first Food and Drink Awards night in London. We had a few such events and I was very pleased to meet Jerome Flynn, Wendy Turner Webster (who supported us on many occasions and become our patron in 2004) and Hazel O’Connor, all guests for the event. Jerome in particular was very supportive and I was to meet him on other occasions. He even took the trouble to write personally to me to explain his spiritual beliefs – a lovely man who became a patron of the society. At the 2003 awards night I was seated with Howard Jones. As I am a fan of his music that was also very pleasant, especially as he very kindly played for us at the event. In 2005 Tony Banks (then Lord Stratford) was a guest at our Awards Ceremony, I believe the last we held, on the Cutty Sark. He was a lovely man who gave us support at other events and his death the following year was a great loss to the movement.

Tony was also involved with our big event at Westminster, a lunch in 2006 to promote vegetarianism with our Patron, Sir Paul and a number of MPs and dignitaries. An interesting event, it transpired that Liverpool’s bid for City of Culture was also taking place elsewhere in the house.

I was also fortunate to meet the late Victoria Wood at a London performance when she was presented with Vegsoc’s branded Teddy Bear and the late Tony Wedgwood Benn when he donated an item for our fundraising auction.

I am sure there were others who kindly supported our events and our fundraising but my memory is not perfect. Headly times when I also did lots of exciting travel, including on the Orient Express but that is a whole other story!

Tina Fox

**Check out the website: nestonu3a.org.uk
for all the information about your local u3a.**

Shelagh's bit

Many thanks to those who sent material for this Newsletter. I'm sorry if it's a bit late coming out but the cold has got to my brain and that of Kim, who typesets it. The printed copy will definitely be late because I haven't yet tracked down a printer. The old one has retired.

Thanks to Tina for her article about meeting famous people. Now I can tell you about my own encounter with Sammy Davis Junior of all people. It was many years ago because I was only about 17 at the time. Four of us had been hitch hiking round Scotland during the school holidays and had bagged a lift to Preston Station, where we hoped to catch a train home to Liverpool. It was late and the platform was empty – except for Sammy Davis, a couple of heavies and Mae Britt, who was wearing a long fur coat (probably mink) and a face like a smacked arse. He came over to talk to us and was very jolly and interested to know where we'd been and where we were going. Then, dear readers, then – he did a fabulous dance all around the platform, jumping on and off luggage trolleys. Just for us. Fabulous.

I hope you've all been managing in this horrible cold. I'm getting quite chicken licken about going out on the icy pavements because I really don't want to fall over and break something. I've got enough aches and pains already thank you. We did go to Parkgate on the bus on a beautiful sunny day and the marsh, the ditches and the big ponds were frozen solid. The poor birds were standing about on the ice looking very fed up. There were quite a lot of people out and about – and they were buying ice cream! In this weather?

Is it too late to say Happy New Year? I wish you all a healthy and trouble free 2025.

Shelagh

newslettersecretary@nestonu3a.org.uk

**Want to know what is going on in your u3a?
Then check out our website: nestonu3a.org.uk**



More members at the Christmas
Lunch at the Royal Oak



Urgently Required

We need an apprentice Treasurer. Kim retires from the post next year. He's sorted out the system and computerised it and he promises it's very easy to use. You don't have to go to the bank very often as the Post Office will now accept payments into the Barclays account. All you need is a computer, some patience and a few hours each month to keep things up to date and ticking over. If you volunteer now, it will give you plenty of time to learn the system before it's time to take over. If we don't have a Treasurer, Neston u3a will be no more. Over to you.

Also URGENTLY wanted

We need a replacement Chairperson as Michael retires in May after the AGM. Come on, ladies and gents, all you need is charm, wit, a sparkling personality and some spare time. Failing that, we'll consider anybody. No chairman = no Neston u3a. It's up to you.

Oxymorons from Peter B.

Military Intelligence
Government Organization
Alone Together
Personal Computer
Silent Scream
Living Dead
Same Difference
Taped Live
Plastic Glasses
Pretty Ugly
Head Butt
Working Vacation
Tax Return
Virtual Reality
Microsoft Works





More members enjoying
their Christmas Lunch

