

What's happening in March and April:**The Chairman's Diary**

Confused? I certainly have been. After all the shouting died down and the dust settled, we accepted that the Civic Hall would shut for ever on March 31st and decided to move our monthly speaker meetings to the British Legion next door. Now we're told the Civic Hall won't be closing after all and the money for a new roof and heating system has been found in some council budgets. Given an assurance by the hall manager that remedial work will not affect hirings, we have booked the Civic Hall, hopefully for the future, and definitely for this month's speaker meeting on Thursday March 27th.

While we are grateful to the British Legion for offering us an alternative home, it has not been without its issues. On our first meeting there, in midwinter, there was no heating, on the second the wall screen couldn't be activated which, involved the use of some very old fashioned projector equipment to enable the speaker to show his slides. And finally, this last time, they had placed a full-size pool table right in front of the front row of seats! You couldn't make it up! So there are many reasons to be grateful that we're going back to the Civic Hall this month. Not least so that we can show our support for this historic building which has been our home for more than 20 years.

The other thing you'll be confused about is the possibility of an arrangement with Heswall u3a. However, we've been spared that fate by Pat Kynaston who has volunteered to take over from me as chairman as I've done my five-year stint. Pat was Neston Mayor, has served on Neston Council for more than 10 years and is one of the busiest people I know. In other words, she'll be ideal. And she's saved us from that merger which was, I had come to believe, not likely to be greeted with unanimous joy among their leaders in Heswall.

So what we need now is a replacement for Kim as treasurer when he retires next year and Neston U3A can carry on providing what is for many of us a great deal of companionship and interests that may be new to us or long cultivated but that we can share with others.

Michael Grumett

Singing for Fun

If you enjoy singing and want to get out and meet new and old friends, the Singing for Fun group could be just what you're looking for. We are a friendly group, singing both old favourites and some new songs. It is not a choir as such but a group who sing for fun with keyboard accompaniment. We meet on Friday afternoons 2-4pm every fortnight, breaking in the summer and at Christmas, at the URC hall on Parkgate Road. There is a small charge to cover expenses.

Contact Celia Grumett 0151 336 5474 c.wg@hotmail.co.uk.



Earth and Beyond Group

Now into our 9th 6-monthly programme, our Earth and Beyond group continues to thrive. We meet in the Neston Community and Youth Centre at 2 pm on the second Tuesday of each month, where we invite a specialist to give us a talk on any chosen aspect relating to the earth or space; almost any topic with a science related background can be heard! Our most recent talk was Life on Mars? And future talks will include - Welsh Copper, The History of Domestic Lighting and The Shape of the Dee Estuary. Subject to the speakers' approval we are now experimenting with videoing the presentations so members of the group can watch them again later on YouTube, or for those members who are unable to attend the meeting. All presentations are at a basic level and last around 45 minutes. Prior to the presentation tea/coffee and biscuits are available at a cost of 50p. These are enjoyable social gatherings and in December we hold our annual Christmas buffet along with a talk.

On the last Tuesday of each month we hold a members meeting at 10.30 am, normally by Zoom, where members can all contribute with brief talks and discussions also covering any aspects of the earth and space. Recent talks have included details of a visit to the Heavy Water production facility in Norway, Derbyshire and the Peak District and "Why does Trump want Greenland?"

We also arrange trips to places of shared interest and these have included local geology sites, Jodrell Bank, the Catalyst Science Discovery Centre and Museum, Widnes and the Lion Salt Works, Marston, near Northwich.

Members also share articles of interest on our Padlet site:

https://padlet.com/u3aneston_earthnbeyond/PinBoard

We welcome new members, and if you are interested you can find more details on our website:

<https://nestonu3a.org.uk/the-earth-beyond/>

The Jazz Group

Last month we watched, on my TV, an incredible concert by the Wynton Marsalis big band. Probably next month some Nat King Cole. The styles go from King Oliver to now.

As part of the Neston Music Festival, I have arranged a concert at the Neston Cricket Club on Friday 9th May by the Peninsula Jazzmen plus guest star Phil Lucas.

Room for a couple more to come to the Jazz Group.

Clive Edwards



Phil Lucas



Peninsula Jazzmen

Exploring Music

This group meets at 2pm on the second Monday of the month at our house in Little Neston from November-April. I choose a topic for each session and introduce the music with brief details of the type and construction of melody, the plan of the music and the instruments used. Topics are very varied: I have covered piano music, folk songs, composers such as J S Bach, Handel, Mozart, Beethoven and others. In March I plan to cover British composers. Spaces are limited but we always try to fit people in.

Contact Celia Grumett 0151 336 547
c.wg@hotmail.co.uk.

The History Group

We meet on the last Monday in the month at 2pm in Neston Library. We are on a world historical tour and have arrived in the Far East in 1939. Members are invited to research a relevant country and give a short resume of their findings with reference to that particular period. There is no pressure to contribute. You can just come along and listen to some fascinating reports. And there is tea, coffee and biscuits.

Contact Michael Grumett 0151 336 5474 m.grumett@hotmail.co.uk.

Did you Cry with Cassandra?

If your answer is 'yes', I know that, like me you watched the TV series about the later years of Jane Austen's life and of her sister Cassandra. The programme was not all sad because of the witty dialogue between Jane and her sister. There were also glimpses of dances in grand houses. Jane, apparently, loved dancing and was disappointed to reach the age of 30 when women were considered too old to jig around. She comforted herself with the thought that she could sit nearer the fire and drink wine!

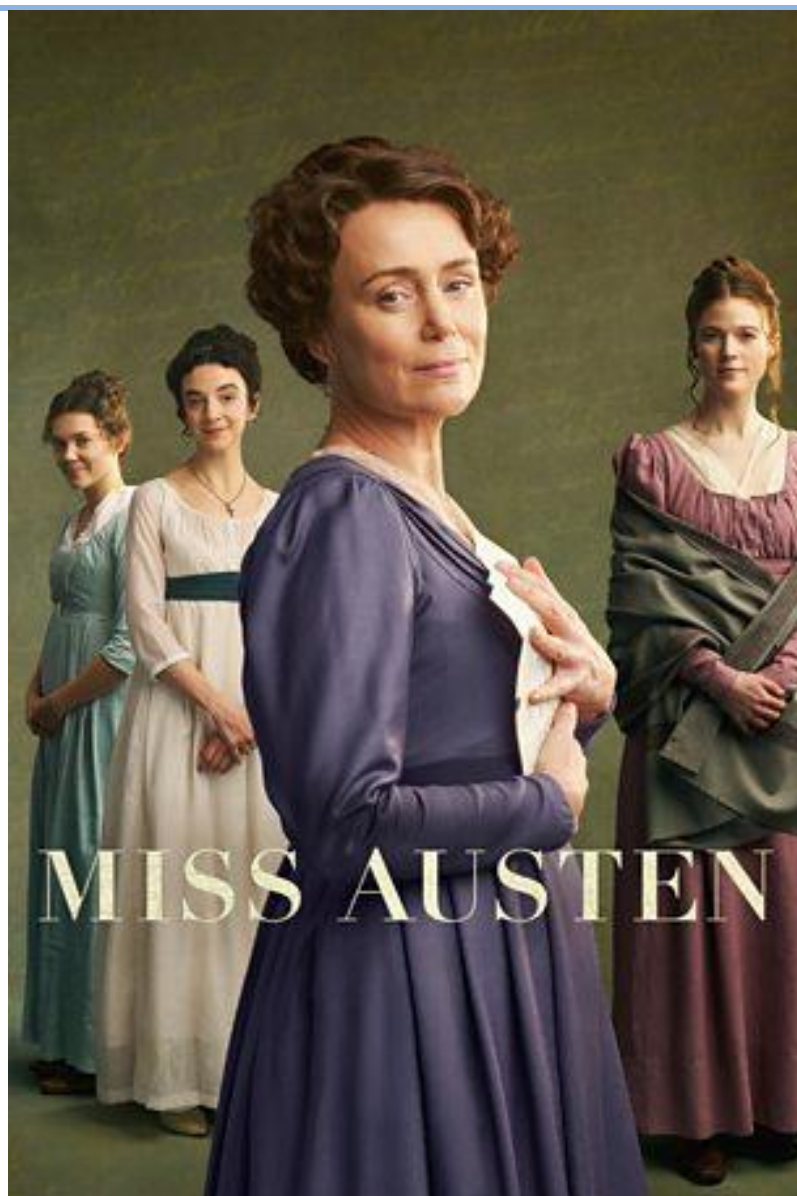
If we had lived at that time we might have been happy to sit and watch because the dances were not done in the slow stately style which we may imagine. In "Mansfield Park" it was noticed that Fanny was getting tired because she was walking the dances rather than doing the steps. I suspect that some of the steps were not unlike those we use today in Scottish dancing. Those of you who have done Scottish Dancing will know how vigorous it is.

Even when walked, the dances of this period are great fun to do and the music is lovely. Your Barn Dance group always do quite a few dances from this period. We meet at Neston URC every Friday fortnight from 2-4.pm. You do not need a partner, you will be made very welcome.

Dates Feb 21, Mar 7, Mar 21, April 4, May 2, May 16, May 30,

Miss Austen is still available on BBC iPlayer.

Ann Taylor



Walking Group

Tuesday 4th February saw an intrepid group of 12 walkers catch the 9:40am no. 22 bus to Chester - we didn't really take over the bus but....

Once at the bus station we set off to walk a circular route taking in the Shropshire Union Canal, the River Dee and the Roodee (not necessarily in that order).

We were joined half-way round by an even more intrepid member of the group who had gone that extra 'mile' to join us. The member lives in Thornton Hough but the first bus they could catch to Neston (using the concessionary bus pass) meant they would have missed the 9:40 bus no 22. So they took a bus to Bebington, caught the train to Chester and then walked to meet up with us before we walked the footpath along the edge of the Racecourse.

That's what we call dedication to being a member of the group.

Hilary Eaude



Important!

If you're leaving your car at the British Legion car park and you haven't already done so, don't forget to send your registration number to Kim *in plenty of time* or you'll end up with a fine.

treasurer@nestonu3a.org.uk

Reading for Pleasure Group

This group is full at the moment as we meet in each other's houses and not all rooms can accommodate large numbers in comfort. Also, everyone is encouraged to speak, so there is a pressure on time sometimes. We meet on the third Monday of the month in the afternoon from 2.30 to 4.30. As we all take it in turns to offer hospitality, our donations are collected and at the end of the year we agree a charity to send them to.

We are not a conventional Reading Group in that we don't have set books, but instead we bring the books we have been reading over the last month and talk about them. That again limits our numbers as some of us read a lot of books in a month and we need the time to talk about them all. We also swap books when they are not library books or lent to us by other friends. I think it is true to say that we have all extended our horizons when it comes to reading, and found ourselves loving books we would not ourselves have taken off the shelves.

The facilitator of the group at the moment is Elizabeth Pettigrew. Her job is to make sure everyone knows the date and place of the next meeting and to keep the donations together till the end of the year. The meetings themselves need no work as they organise themselves, just a matter of making sure that the general chat at the beginning doesn't take up too much of the time.

In view of all that, and because the group is now closed to new members, I would really encourage anyone interested in starting another group, to give it a go. It is a great way to make new friends and expand your reading scope.

Tina Fox

Important

Please note that any change of personal details should be sent to your Membership Secretary, Vivian. membershipsecretary@nestonu3a.org.uk

North West Summer School
12th – 15th August at Manchester University
Northwestregion.u3asite.org.uk

**If you know of any members who are unwell or in hospital,
please let Doreen Higgins know on 336 5108 and she'll send them a card.**

VE Tea Dance

08 May 2025, 14:00 – 16:00

at Neston Civic Hall

An afternoon of entertainment & dance, celebrating and reflecting the 80th Anniversary of the Victory in Europe Day.
Sing along and reminisce to music from the war days.

Barn Dance

09 May 2025, 19:00 – 22:00

Neston Civic Hall

Come along and enjoy an amazing evening of
Boot Scootin'
Boogie to the Cha Cha Slide!

Return of the Lunch Club

Marianne, who has been running the most enjoyable lunch club for some time, hasn't been well recently so Kenny Bird and Shelagh Nugent have taken over for the time being. No money up front, just give us your contact details and turn up at the arranged venue on the day. See us next Speaker Meeting at the raffle table. Don't forget to bring your diary.



Latest Update for Neston Civic Hall

Since the announcement of the return of Neston Civic Hall to Cheshire West and Chester Council scheduled for 31 March 2025, NCYC and Cheshire West and Chester Council have been working closely together to determine a way in which this vital community asset can remain open.

We can confirm that Cheshire West and Chester Council is arranging for urgent repairs to be carried out to Neston Civic Hall that will allow the building to remain open, at least until 30 September 2025 to allow time for further discussions.

Councillor Louise Gittins, Leader of Cheshire West and Chester Council said: "We have been working closely with Neston Community and Youth Centre who have been managing the building, to ensure this vital community asset can remain open. This is a temporary measure and allows time for discussions to make the Civic Hall and its operations sustainable in the longer-term".

Rachael Furey, Chief Executive of Neston Community Youth Centre said: "After these immediate repairs have been completed, the Hall will be fit for purpose, and we will be able to accept bookings in the sure knowledge that the facilities will be available. We are particularly grateful to the three local Councillors from Cheshire West and Chester Council who have contributed from their personal Councillor budgets to make this possible."

Neston Civic Hall dates back to 1902, starting out as a Red Cross Hospital during the First World War. On 2 June 1960 Neston Civic Hall, then known as The Institute, welcomed the first performance of the Beatles, under their new name (changing their name from the Silver Beetles).

The Civic Hall will still require major investment to carry out vital repair work and improvements to ensure it remains safe and fit for purpose in the long term.

We are now in the process of contacting all our regular hirers and those with events booked at Neston Civic Hall.

Rachael Furey

You can see that these toilets are attended to regularly by our dedicated team of cleaning staff. However, if you find that the toilet rolls have run out, please see our staff who will try to help you catch 'em....

Those of you who think you know everything are annoying to those of us who do.

Remember that age and treachery will always triumph over youth and ability.

To err is human, to really foul things up requires a computer.

Snippets from Peter Bolderson

Editor's bit

I don't know about you lot but I'm getting very confused about our changing venues. Hopefully we'll now be settled into the Civic Hall and let's pray the money comes from somewhere to keep it going. I wish they'd get some better chairs tho, the ones they provide are not designed for bad backs. I'd also like to remind you that Pat, who's stepping in as Chair, is doing it to help us out but she hasn't got a lot of time to spare so we're still looking for someone to take on the job on a more permanent basis. We also need an apprentice Treasurer to take over from Kim next year. Let's not be complacent – we need volunteers or we peg out.

I enjoyed the last speaker meeting about the hearing dogs – but, because I happen to have good hearing (it's about the only bit of me that works properly), I was irritated by a couple of women who gabbed between themselves throughout. I nearly got up to have words but didn't want to disrupt things further. Please have some respect for the speakers and other people who are trying to listen. If you're bored or not interested, why don't you just quietly leave?

Praise be for sunshine and spring flowers. Doesn't it make you feel better? And I have it on good authority that Doreen and Dot are starting to plot new outings for the coming year. We're also thinking about another Summer lunch in lieu of the July Speaker Meeting, when the Civic Hall won't be available. Any thoughts on that?

If you've got anything interesting to say, news, thoughts, snippets, please email newslettersecretary@nestonu3a.org.uk If you're sending photos, please send them on a separate email and not imbedded in the text because it makes Kim, who does the typesetting, swear horribly and you know how delicate my ears are.

Now go outside and get some fresh air! Don't be sitting there watching the telly.

Best wishes from Shelagh

Membership subs are due in March and will be going up to £16 (only £1 increase)

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