

### ***What's happening in September and October:***

#### **From the Chairman**

As a new member to U3A - other than supporting your speaker secretary - and going straight into the Chairman's position I feel I need to just take time to see what works for our members and also where we could make small changes that could widen the offer to all our members. I would welcome your thoughts on how we might achieve this.

Our group volunteers would also welcome help with running their individual activities and you may be surprised at the good feeling you get when you're helping as well as joining in the activities. Ask us where you could get involved.

I'm looking forward to coming to as many of the side groups as possible over the next few months and meeting members who may not come to the speaker meetings.

The long run of very warm weather is coming to an end and some rain is certainly on the way but the gardens do need it and it's fresher for us to get out and be active. U3A is here to help you do that with other members.

Warm wishes from Pat Kynaston



#### **Anne Hine**

It was with great sadness that we heard, as the newsletter went to press, that Anne Hine had died. Anne was one of the U3A's most stalwart supporters who could be relied upon to be always there, come Covid or high water. A chemist with a degree from Cardiff University, she had been a long term member of the committee when I took over as chairman five years ago. Her enthusiasm for Neston U3A was total. I remember greeting her at one of our Christmas lunches and thanking her for coming. 'Oh,' she said, 'I wouldn't miss this for the world'.

Her last days or weeks were spent in a hospice, writing thank you cards to everybody. How many people do that? One of the recipients was Doreen Higgins who showed me her card. Anne even thanked Neston U3A for all it had done for her over the years. And I was honoured to read her words to the August meeting at the Civic Hall. She will be sadly missed.

Michael Grumett

## U3A Future Programme

**September 25<sup>th</sup>** An open meeting.

This is an opportunity for you to ask questions and discuss what you might like your u3a to offer. Group leaders will be talking about the various groups open to members and what they do. We can't promise everything is possible but it's good to discuss options. Please remember, your committee and organisers are all volunteers so some ideas are NOT possible

**October 30<sup>th</sup>** A varied life - Police Officer, Immigration Official and acting along the way - Tim Perrin. The title says it all. Tim has seen life at its best and worst. The talk will be enhanced with slides.

**November 27<sup>th</sup>** Liverpool's Overhead Railway by Gavin Hunter

Were you around the area when this was operating? Hear about the world's first electric elevated railway, built in 1893 to serve Liverpool's docks and cargo routes. Find out why it was closed in 1956 and how it was replaced by buses and trains. All illustrated by Gavin's excellent slides.

**December** - The Christmas Lunch at the Royal Oak will be on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December. Tickets will be on sale from the September Groups Meeting. Price not yet confirmed but we think it will be £18. It would be good if you could pay by cheque so bring your cheque book if you have one. We can't take card payment. Cash is acceptable if it's the right money.

## Summer Lunch

The meal at the Royal Oak was lovely, like a Christmas one we had with my WI. I am the Secretary of Ness and Little Neston WI.

Jean and I really enjoyed the company, sitting opposite Vivien and Margaret. We did have such a good laugh. I have good sense of humour, well I am from Liverpool, Allerton, and have lived in Neston for over 40 years. I worked in Rodney Street in Architects as Senior Partners' Secretary for 24 years. My husband was the Quantity Surveyor there. I had known him since 1972 but we only got together in 1985 bit of a Mills and Boon story.

I like the sound of a casual get together in local pub for a meal and natter. You all seem to be a good sociable crowd.

Regards,

Joan

*Welcome to new members Joan and Jean*

## Lunch Club

Our next meeting will be Thursday September 18<sup>th</sup>, 12.30 for 1pm at the Nag's Head, Willaston. Please let us know if you are coming as we have to book a table.

Kenny and Shelagh

[ronwenbird@gmail.com](mailto:ronwenbird@gmail.com)

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The glacial erratics, the large boulders displayed near the Visitors Centre at Wirral Country Park, came out of the Thurstaston Cliffs, and are thought to have come from as far as the Irish Sea, Scotland and the Lake District.

## Earth and Beyond Group Field Trip to Thurstaston Beach

Led by our member and Emeritus Professor of Geology, Jim Marshall, members of the Earth and Beyond Group explored the geologically important glacial history of the Thurstaston shoreline.

Jim explained that the valley may have been cut by advancing ice (during the last and previous glacial advances) - and by sub-glacial erosion by water. The last Ice sheet likely reached as far south as the Wirral about 27,000 years ago with a maximum depth at 23,000 and left about 19,000.

We collected specimens of rock and Jim explained their individual geological age and history along with suggestions of the locations from which the glacier had collected them. He also demonstrated markings showing where they had been scraped whilst being gripped in the ice.

We saw the different layers found in the unstable cliffs of boulder clay that were deposited as the glacier moved through the landscape. These layers of poorly sorted rock specimens are known as till and were likely deposited under the moving ice (plastered on the base) and the gravel layers by fast moving streams under the ice.

The Earth and Beyond group meets at 2 pm in the Community and Youth Centre on the second Tuesday of the month. Future talks include the History of Domestic Lighting, Offshore Renewable Energy - especially the future of Tidal Energy, Jupiter and its Moons and the Unexpected Consequences of Global Warming. Field trips are arranged two or three times a year. For more details see our pages on the Neston U3a website <https://nestonu3a.org.uk/the-earth-beyond/>



Collected specimens being reviewed.



**PUB GRUB:** a new regular feature, a pub/restaurant guide by that well-known bon viveur your old ex-chairman Michael Grumett

Over lunch at The Harry Beswick in Heswall with your esteemed editor, I floated the idea of this column in response to her plea for more material for the next newsletter. Given her enthusiastic approval, this is hopefully the first of a series. I'll classify the pubs I report on as either posh and pricey (PP) or cheap and cheerful (CC) and they will be local so I won't be reporting on the Michelin-starred La Popote near Congleton where you can spend £400 on a bottle of wine and £20 on a bottle of imported water. This could also be a Save Our Pubs campaign as, according to The Times, eight pubs a week are closing because of tax and labour costs.

So to The Harry Beswick, which is a converted police station. The brewery owners have obviously spent a small fortune on the interior, which is very impressive so this, being Heswall, is in the PP category. But, considering how much they have spent on the place, it is extraordinary that there is not any disabled access to the building (at least, none that we could find). Having parked Celia's Motability car in a disabled bay in the car park, we looked for the disabled access in vain. So we had to walk out of the car park, up the pavement outside and in through the main entrance. On leaving, I drove the car round and parked on the double yellows outside the front door, displaying Celia's blue badge, which meant we were parked on Telegraph Road which is well known as the Heswall race track, where you can lose more than a wing mirror.

But what about the food and service you ask? Excellent all round but this was a Monday lunch time so the place was practically empty.

By contrast, we next went to the Green Oak Farm pub in Ellesmere Port which is CC and all the better for it. It has a help-yourself carvery which I always use as I like to decide how much I want to eat. The service is quick and efficient in a relaxed atmosphere.

By contrast, we tried The Old Hall Farm on the border of Cheshire Oaks shopping centre. Here you have to queue up at the till to order meal and drinks, only to be told there is an hour's wait for food – unless you have the carvery which, of course, we all did. We ended up in a sort of extension to the main building alongside a large, noisy family gathering with children screaming in and out of the garden. Not our sort of relaxed scene at all.

Our next port of call defies my PP/CC categorisation. To get to The White Lion at Childer Thornton you drive off the Welsh Road into narrow country lanes until you suddenly come across this delightful pub in its forgotten backwater. You go down a narrow corridor to a private room – well, we always have it to ourselves – which is quiet, no annoying music, and there is attentive service by young men. It is gloriously old-fashioned with generous portions and rice pudding or apple pie and custard to follow. Of course it is family-run which makes all the difference. Highly recommended.

Most pubs are now restaurants but there is one notable exception on our doorstep: The Royal Oak on The Green in Little Neston, the venue for our u3a lunches. As this is the only pub I can walk into and find a glass of red wine waiting for me on the bar, I admit to being biased. At our Summer lunch, one of our members took a tumble on his way in. A member of staff sat him down and immediately started to clean

and bandage his hand and make sure he was OK. Thanks to their help, he was able to recover and enjoy his meal with his wife and friends. The Royal Oak is still a pub where customers sit at the bar and drink as well as the pub diners. Last Christmas we filled the place with 56 members for our festive meal. However many diners are in, they cope easily even though there seem to be only two men serving the meals and one chef in the kitchen. The answer: it is also still family-run. It is not part of a brewery chain. That, in itself, is extremely rare.

That's all until next time. GGG (that stands for Grand Gourmet Grumett) Cheers!

*GGG = Neston's answer to Giles Coren*

#### **RAFFLE**

In future, there will only be one raffle prize of a £15 supermarket voucher in the hope that it will encourage more people to buy a ticket. We really need to raise funds. See Kim's bar charts.

#### **Important**

Please note that any change of personal details should be sent to your Membership Secretary, Vivian. [membershipsecretary@nestonu3a.org.uk](mailto:membershipsecretary@nestonu3a.org.uk)

#### **Outings:**

Two new outings from Doreen

##### **BODRHYDDAN HALL**, Dyserth.

Manor house and gardens

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September

A tour is followed by TEA and CAKE

The coach will leave from St Michael's Church car park (top of Marshlands Road) Little Neston at 1pm.

Cost for COACH, HALL TOUR and TEA is £37

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM, Salford Quays, Manchester

Tuesday 7th October

Leaving St Michael's Church car park, Little Neston at 10am

Cost is £24 (if we get a full bus).

See Doreen or Dot at a meeting or phone Doreen: 336 5108

**Note NEW CAR PARKING arrangements.**

**NB:** It will no longer be possible to post printed copies of the newsletter to members without email due to high postage costs. They can be picked up at Speaker Meetings or perhaps at a group meeting. If you know of any such member, please pass on this message.

DREAMTIME by Pauline Salis

Have I been living my life in a dream,  
Drifting in the wind like Autumn leaves,  
Dreaming away the golden hours it seems  
In the make-believe world that stories weave?  
Did I slip on a magical ring to hide  
Like the silver moon in a cloudy sky,  
To sail on the clouds, to float and glide,  
To watch the busy world hurrying by?  
I have dwelt in a twilight haze  
Of myth and legend and fantasy,  
Wandering in enchantment's easy ways,  
Dancing in the shadows of mystery.  
Dreamers of the wide world, dreamtime is ours,  
Drifting dreamily with the midnight stars.

*Pauline is a founder member of Poetry and Prose Group 3*

It is with great sadness that I share the news of the death of Eric Midwinter, one of the visionary co-founders of the u3a movement in the UK.

Eric, alongside Peter Laslett and Michael Young, established u3a in 1982 with the belief that later life should be a time of continued learning, connection, and contribution. Eric's commitment to challenging negative stereotypes of ageing, and to creating spaces for older adults to share skills, knowledge, and friendship, has shaped the lives of hundreds of thousands of u3a members over four decades.

Eric's vision has flourished over the years and we know that his legacy will continue to inspire new generations to embrace lifelong learning and positive ageing.

We extend our deepest sympathies to Eric's family and friends at this time.

You can watch a conversation between Eric and Liz Thackray about the movement, recorded in 2022 for our 40th Anniversary, on [our YouTube Channel](#).

Best wishes,  
Iain Cassidy  
CEO of the Third Age Trust

Our efficient secretary, Jill, has booked the Civic Hall for Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> December. We hope to have a Christmas Party (I know – plus a lunch at the Royal Oak, is there no holding us back?) but we'd like some suggestions for format, activities, food and drink and, most important, how much are you prepared to pay? You won't get much for a £3 entry fee! Please get in touch with any committee member with ideas and suggestions. The September meeting would be an ideal time. Anybody want to organise it?

### **Neston u3a struggles to engage members.**

A recent article in u3a Connections from the founder Eric Midwinter might be a useful wake up call to our members.

Eric's article was entitled GET INVOLVED & read:

*The u3a is a thriving, evolving organisation but being part of it - as implied in the small print when members join - obliges everyone to contribute to the working of the organisation and to help recruit new members. This is a mutual, proactive cooperative - not a dated Darby and Joan club where members amble along being looked after by others!*

I became a member of Neston u3a way back in 2002/3 and very quickly became a committee member. I have led gardening group 2 for most of this time and am still doing so and I organised outings & lunches for several years. It's not difficult.

Pat Mann

### **Antiques and Collectables.**

This a very popular and active group and unfortunately and is full.

I've attached the new programme for 2025-2026. As you will see it's varied.

Liz

#### **Programme 2025-2026**

##### **2025**

Sept 25th Civic Hall - highlighting the group

Oct 6th Glass

Nov 3rd Arts and Crafts

Dec 1st Christmas Quiz

April 6th Figurine

May 4th Pottery

June 1st Has a head

July 6th Pot-Luck

An outing?

Would anyone like to give a talk on a specific topic?

##### **2026**

Jan 5th Something with a hinge

Feb 2nd Insects/creepy crawlies

March 2nd Something with writing on it

Hulme Hall Flea Market:

Sept 7<sup>th</sup>, Oct 5th, Nov 2nd, Dec 7th

Antique/Vintage Fair Sept 21st, Oct 19th

### **September Social**

Members may be aware that the September meeting will be a social event with, hopefully, most of our groups showcasing what they have to offer. Entrance will be free and it is a chance to get to know other members, groups available and maybe even suggest new ones and recruit for them. We are also going to invite members of the public to increase our membership and show the folk of Neston what is on offer. So if you know anyone who might be interested, encourage them to come. Finally a plea – if any of you out there are bakers we would love some homemade cakes to give to those attending!

Best wishes,

Tina Fox, Groups Co-ordinator.

## TAKING THE PLUNGE

When I joined the U3A I was disappointed to discover that there was no group for one of my favourite pastimes, country dancing. Still there was no reason why I should not set one up myself, after all it was something I had done before. So one Friday morning eighteen years ago I joined other U3A members in their Neston Market walkabout. I was looking for a reel of yellow ribbon. You wonder what is the connection to dancing. There are simply not enough men to partner the women so we needed bands to distinguish those women who were dancing as men. I decided to call the group a Barn Dance group because I had seen plenty of our members at Barn Dances with both men and women enjoying themselves. Why were the men happy to join an evening dance but reluctant to join a group? Was it anything to do with the presence of alcohol at one but not the other? Did our men really need a few beers to release their inhibitions? A regular supply of afternoon alcohol was not something I wanted to get involved in!

There were about 20 members at our first meeting. Was I nervous? Very. Did we make mistakes? Lots. Did we laugh about it? Of course. For the first 2 years the group went well but came to a sudden stop with the discovery of a lump in my breast. I did not know whether I would be able to continue. To my surprise, a group of dancers asked if they could run the group until I was able to return. Privately I thought 'until' should be replaced with 'if' but I was very happy that they wanted to continue.

I did recover and now I have several helpers to whom I am very grateful: Joyce Seeton, Pam Irving and Pat Cross. I do not know what I would have done without them.

18 years and still going. We must have done something right.

Barn Dancing begins again on Friday September 12th, 2pm until 4pm

Ann Taylor

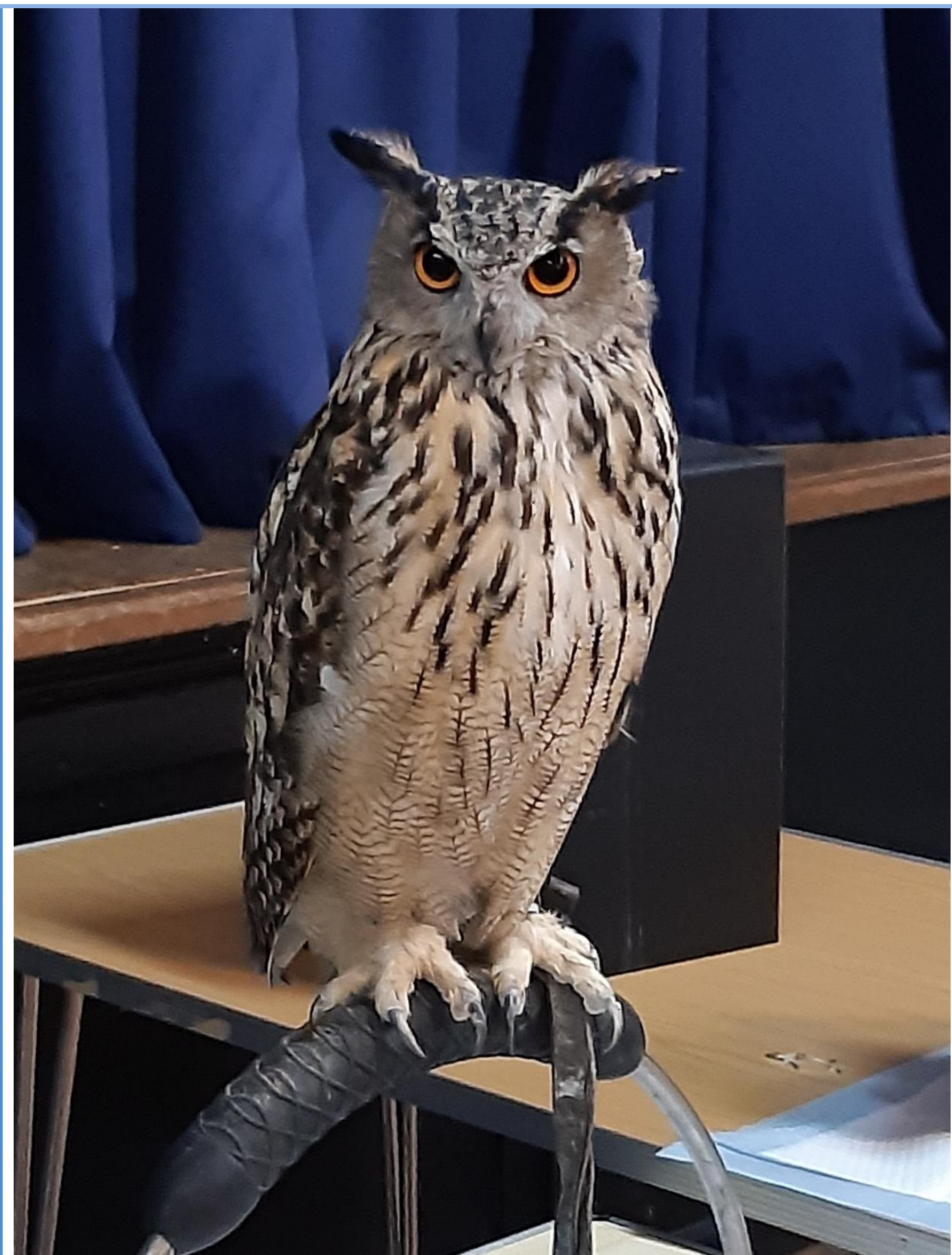


Barn owl and a southern white-faced owl shown at this month's Speaker Meeting.

Everyone at the meeting thoroughly enjoyed the talk and interaction with the owls.







The European Eagle Owl – looking very fierce but appeared to really enjoy being stroked.

All agreed it was an exceptional meeting.

## Scam Warning!

*This was kindly sent to me by my friend Lynne Patrick, member of Witney u3a. I'm including it because I believe one of our gardening groups has also been targeted so beware!*

Yesterday I was almost the victim of a very clever scam which would have cost me at least £300 if I hadn't become suspicious. I really thought my inner scam detector was in full working order, but clearly no one is immune from these criminals; it took me half a day to realize something was wrong, and I came very close to falling for it. This is what happened. I received an e-mail from someone I know slightly from an interest group I belong to. She was having difficulty ordering something online, and asked if I could help. I was perturbed about why she was asking me; I've hardly exchanged a dozen words with her outside the group sessions. But she was quite firm that I was the best person to help. She wanted to order something from Amazon to be sent to a recently bereaved friend, and sent me an elaborate link to the product. She said she was having trouble with her bank account, which would be resolved in a couple of days, and would pay me back as soon as she could. I have strong personal reasons for not using Amazon under any circumstances, so I replied with some excuse, and said I would try to find her an alternative supplier. A series of e-mails ensued; I asked several times why she had come to me for help, and not someone much closer, and she became evasive. That was when I realized something was wrong. I hardly know the woman at all and don't have a phone number for her, so I e-mailed the interest group leader, who phoned me within minutes. Several people, including her, had received similar e-mails supposedly from the same woman; it was definitely a scam. The group leader rang me again a little while later, to say that the matter was resolved, and the supposed sender of the e-mails was now back in control of her e-mail address. I thanked her and heaved a sigh of relief - until this morning, when another e-mail arrived, asking if I had made the purchase. I didn't reply. And a few minutes ago, there was yet another. The interest group leader has contacted the supposed sender to warn her, and has also sent me a website address which I can use to report the incident to the police:

<https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/> I'm about to do exactly that.

## From the Editor

Season of mists and melancholia! I have mixed feelings about encroaching Autumn and the dreaded Winter that waits in the wings. Summer always seems to gallop along and is over too soon. Autumn is a beautiful season and I love to see and hear the geese flying but it always makes me sad. We also seem to have been saying goodbye to too many of our friends these days. My personal belief is that they've gone on an exciting onward journey, I hope so, but we still miss them.

So let's cheer ourselves up with positive plans for the approaching Winter. Get your vests out and air them. Stock up on plenty to read, think about craft work and cooking hearty soups. Start putting the garden to bed. And be sure to get out and about. Don't succumb to the dreaded daytime TV – do something with your friends instead. Think about u3a groups you can join and see if there's anything you can contribute.

With that in mind, I hope to see many of you (and your friends) at the September meeting. It should be interesting. And it's free to go in! Who can resist?

With warm wishes from Shelagh  
newslettersecretary@nestonu3a.org.uk





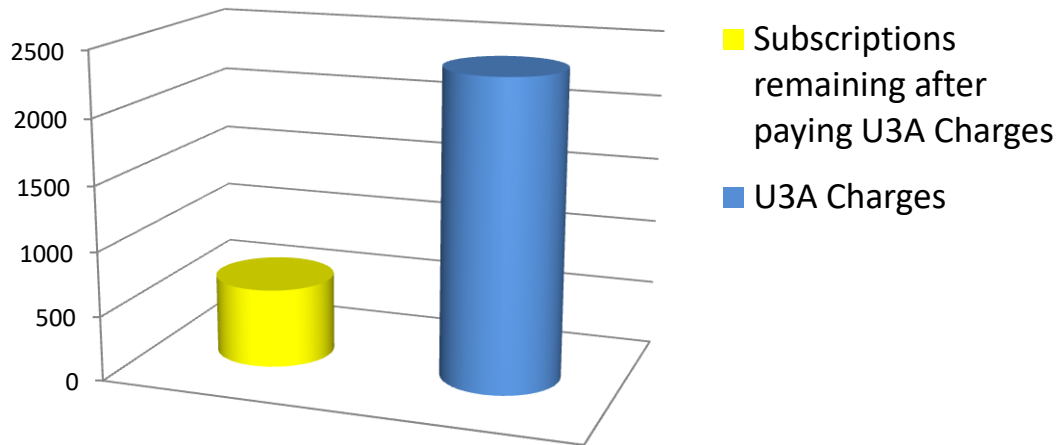
**Another successful u3a Summer Lunch at the Royal Oak**



## How members' subscriptions were spent for the year 2024-25.

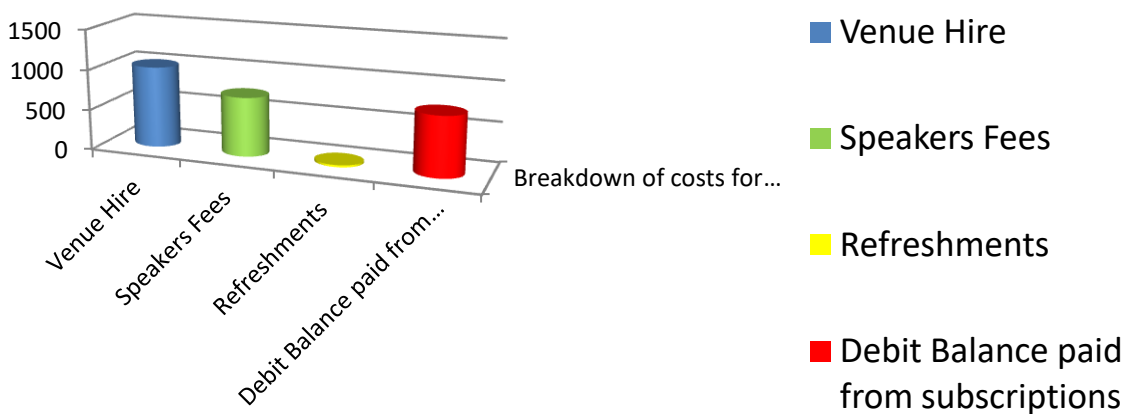
I'm aware that members are not happy with the increase in subscription and entrance fees. So I thought I would take this opportunity to give you an easier way to understand where all the money goes.

### U3A Charges against members subscriptions



The chart shows the percentage, £2,359 = 79.4%, of subscription fees of £2,970 that are paid to U3A Trading, leaving just £611 for administration costs.

### Expenditure on Monthly Speaker Meetings 2024-5



The chart shows a loss of 41.8% against the other costs.

Total costs were £1,946.

Entrance fees = £1,028. Loss = **£918**.



