

Neston u3a Bulletin

September 2026



What's happening in September and October 2026:

Journeys worth sharing – u3a getaways

This exciting new initiative has been developed especially for u3a members, combining expert-led cultural learning, carefully selected destinations and the opportunity to share new experiences with like-minded people from across the u3a movement.

This Autumn members have the chance to join *Appreciating Shakespeare* in Stratford-upon-Avon from 12 to 15 October 2026 – an opportunity to explore the Bard's life and works in his home town.

[Explore the full schedule of future getaways.](#)



Message from Head Office

u3a Week - ideas and resources

It's not long now until **u3a Week** (19th – 27th September). This year, we're challenging members to step out of their comfort zone and try something new - and we want to celebrate everyone who does!

Let us know what you've got planned for u3a Week and help inspire other u3as - send an email to communications@u3a.org.uk. Please also share this widely with your members and encourage everyone to get involved.

Not sure what to try? We've got plenty of ideas on the u3a website to get you started, as well as useful resources for putting on your own u3a events. We'll also be running online events throughout the week - so please share this with your u3a.

www.nestonu3a.org.uk

U3a Festival 2026 York

It's been a month since the u3a Festival at the University of York. Feedback from members has been overwhelmingly positive, with strong support for future Festivals.

Many respondents commented on the welcoming atmosphere, the enthusiasm of volunteers and the opportunity to meet people from other u3as, reinforcing the Festival's role in strengthening engagement with the wider movement.

Attendees praised the breadth and quality of activities on offer, valuing the opportunity to explore new interests, develop existing ones and take part in experiences that were not always available through their local u3a.

There were some areas flagged for improvement that will be taken into consideration when planning future events.

[Watch our Festival highlights film.](#)

IMPORTANT

You'll be aware that somebody or other is usually taking photos at group meetings, outings, lunches. Some of them will end up in the newsletter and on the Neston u3a website. If you would prefer that your photo not be made public, please ask the photographer to delete your image.

OLD BIKES FOR REFUGEES

A new member of Neston u3a is a keen cyclist and donates old bikes to those in need. Do you have a bike in your shed you don't use? Do you have any spare bike parts? Would you ask your friends and colleagues too?

We'd be so grateful if people could bring bikes or bike parts into Asylum Link (7 Overbury Street, L7 3HJ) on any Tuesday or Wednesday between 10am and 3pm.

If this isn't possible, please get in touch with Neston u3a member Brian MacDonald, Little Neston on 07522 919 974

Brian can collect or you can drop your bike off anytime with him .

The Neston U3A Singing for Fun group starts up again, after its Summer break, on Friday 11th September. We meet once a fortnight on a Friday afternoon 2-4pm in the United Reform Church hall just off Parkgate Road. We sing all sorts of songs and have a break for a cuppa and chat. There is a small charge. If you would like to join our group, just turn up on 11th September.

Thanks, Celia.

Civic Hall Meetings.

In future, to avoid disturbance to speakers (and members) once the meeting has started, doors will be closed at 1.55pm. So be early! (Remember Hilda Baker who used to say, 'Be soon'?)



Garden group 2's July meeting was a visit to Norley Bank Farm, near Frodsham. What a beautiful garden it is! Full of colour despite the lack of rain (they have a watering system for the different beds), and shrubs and plants in abundance.

The drive to the house is lined with a colourful wildflower border. Two beds had only been seeded 8 weeks earlier but were full of a diverse and interesting collection of annuals. Perennials were dotted throughout the beds and included numerous Salvias, Stokesia, Penstemon, Tracheleum and many others - all at differing heights to complement the shrubs they accompanied.

There are two ponds and a self-guided walk through a large field led to a stumpery.

The refreshment cakes were very good and included a damson jam (homemade from their own damson tree) Victoria sponge - very moreish.

A garden definitely worth a visit/revisit - they open for the NGS for 4 Sundays in July & August.

Hilary Eaude



Pub Grub

How your long suffering columnist survived the heatwave, serious illness and being cut off by Sky to experience lunch at a pub which has just had £1.5m spent on it. Who said pubs are failing?

Despite being one of the first journalists in Britain to use a computer thanks to Eddie Shah, I hate technology in all its forms, a loathing that reached new levels the other weekend when, out of the blue, we lost our internet connection at home. At a stroke, phones and laptops died. We were cut off all weekend.

For our sins, we're with Sky so I tried to contact them, only to find myself talking to a machine. As you do. Eventually, Celia managed to contact some remote Sky complaints centre – in Scotland! - and pleaded that she is disabled and I'm 88 and we cannot be cut off like this! The next minute, we're back on – just like that! No explanation. No apology. I hate all technology. Computers and mobile phones were the worst inventions ever. End of rant. Or perhaps not. Read on ...

We're never going away again! And this is why. If you combine a terrible, Spanish-style heatwave with a bout of poisoning, you can get some idea what our so-called holiday was like. The plan was to meet up with assorted relatives for an annual gathering and then go on to the famous History Festival outside Salisbury and we were really looking forward to it, having booked Premier Inns and made expensive festival arrangements. The night before all this was due to happen, we were both struck down with traumatic vomiting. Suffice to say, the Premier Inn in Salisbury had to change the bed and clean the room. The only thing we could do was to cancel the family lunch, abandon the history festival and drive straight home, a journey from hell only relieved by two stops at posh pubs. One thing will always stay with me though: Celia asked at the Premier Inn if she could have a slice of bread, the only thing she could manage after being sick, only to be told she couldn't have it as breakfast was finished. That's Premier Inns for you!

So back home for the U3A lunch at The Boat House in Parkgate, which has become the in-place since its £1.5m refurbishment. You can see where the money was spent, not only in the new decking upstairs but almost everywhere looked to have been renewed. Even a new disabled loo has been installed! The place was packed with ladies who lunch plus the odd man. We were the same: 15 of us but only three men.

After an hour, I got my poached salmon risotto which was excellent. Others had to wait longer. The problem is that Shelagh and Kenny have made these lunches so popular, the numbers have become almost unwieldy. But I hope they don't give up.

Michael Grumett

PS I was boasting to my neighbour at the lunch that I would be a fit 88 on Sunday. She promptly informed me that she was 90, was entirely fit, took no medication at all and still sings in her choir. That put me in my place alright!

About the Lunch Club – the numbers are getting unwieldy as most pubs want us to pre-order from the menu when there are so many diners. It's difficult to contact everyone and get their response on time. Then there's the problem of people not turning up or people turning up who haven't booked – it's enough to give a woman indigestion. So we have decided that, in future, we'll limit the number to 12. First come first put on the list. The next lunch club will be in October as Kenny and Shelagh are busy in September. Nothing to stop a few of you getting together and doing your own thing!

The Barn Dance group could do with more members
so find out details at the Groups Meeting next month.
September 24th. Bring your friends.

From Mark Steward of the Wirral Footpaths Society

Why the Wirral Footpaths and Open Spaces Preservation Society Matters More Than Ever

Have you ever been walking on the Wirral and noticed the black-and-white fingerposts marking the start of many public footpaths? These familiar signs, part of the area's walking heritage, were provided by the Wirral Footpaths and Open Spaces Preservation Society.

The Society was founded in 1888 by a group of prominent Wirral business people who believed it was vital to protect local footpaths. To put that into some historic perspective that's the same year the lawn tennis association formed, the famous match-girls' strike started and Jack the Ripper caused chaos in London. Within a few years of forming, the Society had surveyed much of the Wirral's footpath system and produced some of the area's earliest walking maps.

The Society has fought (even through the courts when required) to prevent unsafe diversions and closures by landowners and railway companies. This long tradition of vigilance has been upheld by generations of members committed to safeguarding access to Wirral's countryside. For example, the Society has been fighting hard to get a closed footpath in Willaston reopened in recent years.

The Society is as active today as it was when it began, working hard to champion the rights of walkers and nature lovers across the peninsula. Their core work includes:

Advocating for Access - Acting as the voice of footpath users, the Society works closely with Wirral and CWAC local authorities to ensure proper maintenance, development and promotion of local rights of way.

Guarding the Definitive Map - The Society is consulted on proposed changes to the Definitive Map and will object when closures or diversions threaten access.

Community Outreach - From helping practically to maintain footpaths to leading walks during the annual Wirral Walking Festival.

Public Support - They investigate and address issues raised by members and the public, helping resolve day-to-day concerns about access and path condition.

The Society's members act as the eyes and ears of the Wirral, spotting issues, reporting problems, and helping protect green spaces and rights of way. Without strong membership, the Society cannot safeguard these paths effectively. Joining or supporting the Society is one of the most impactful ways to ensure these routes remain open to everyone. You can find more info at **wirralfoothpaths.org.uk** or their Facebook page.

It's very pleasing to see that our new group for members, **Rummikub** is now established and seems to be going well. Lots of interest!

If there is an activity that you are keen to pursue - whether it's just for fun and friendship or to learn new things - it is very likely that others might also like to join in. We are happy to help you get started.

In our September 24th general meeting we are holding an Open Day where you can hear about existing groups, join up and maybe think about new ones.

Tina Fox & Lesley Hobbs are keen to support you and if you have any questions please contact them on groupssecretary@nestonu3a.org.com or publicitysecretary@nestonu3a.org.com

If you, like me, are a dedicated Archers fan you might be interested in going to see The Archers: Live at 75. It's at the Philharmonic on the evening of 28th September.

I have 1, 2 or 3 tickets, top seats, for sale as my guests now can't come. Just contact me if you are interested.

Lesley Hobbs

publicitysecretary@nestonu3a.org.uk

07810 488673



Ann Taylor.

On Friday 17th a large number of U3A members attended the funeral of Ann Taylor at Blacon Crematorium. This was not a sad occasion as it was a celebration of Ann's life and she certainly lived it to the full and gave a lot of joy to a lot of people. Ann was a leading light in U3A, involved in many groups and always with a smile and patience. She taught the Barn Dancing for many years and, despite ill health, she recently supported those trying to carry on the group. She was also a very active member of the English Folk Dance group that met in the URC on Wednesday evenings.

Ann taught Thai cookery for U3A, started the Strollers walking group, was a member of Reading for Pleasure group and led Gardening groups for a number of years. Added to this she did a great deal of cycling, climbing and walking – a very full life.

She has two daughters, both moved to Australia but her daughter Katy and her partner Bruce spent the last three years with Ann in Willaston.



She was always cheerful and helpful despite her later health issues and she will be much missed.

Earth and Beyond Group

Our very popular group meets at 2 pm on the second Tuesday of the month in the Community and Youth Centre. We start with a cuppa and biscuits and at 2.30 listen to a very wide range of talks which last for around 45 minutes followed by a question and answer session. We also arrange visits to sites of mutual interest. More information on group activities and our future programme of talks and visits is available on our website <https://nestonu3a.org.uk/the-earth-beyond/>

Why not come along. We are sure you'll be pleased if you do.



Committee Members: Jill Mcleod (Secretary); Tina Fox (Groups Coordinator); Lesley Hobbs (Publicity Secretary). With Chair Pat Kynaston behind.

Editor's bit

Don't you hate those people who bang on about their last cruise? Well tough, because I'm about to do so – just a little bit. On board were the Orca people. They record whale and dolphin activity, fight their corner and spread the word. We went to one of their lectures and I was fascinated. The talk was about whale and dolphin sounds and communications. I knew they could speak to each other and I knew that whales can send messages over huge distances (1,000 miles for one particular species of whale, whose name I forget). What I didn't know was that dolphins each have a name, given to them at birth by their mother. And – the most enchanting thing – the mothers speak to their baby dolphins in baby talk! I love that. I also found out that the Norwegians are still killing whales – not to eat themselves but to feed to the tourists! So if you're visiting Norway, please don't eat any whale. I wouldn't fancy it anyway but I believe

it was available during the war.

There was quite a good turnout for the 'social' meeting with quiz and cake. I think most people enjoyed themselves, there was certainly plenty of lively chatter going on. I did ask for opinions and comments, good or otherwise. Well, only one person responded (thanks Phil). The thing is, dear members, if you don't tell us (the committee) what you enjoy and what you would like to happen,

it leaves us groping around in the darkness of ignorance. We aim to please so help us out! Perhaps we'll look for a speaker who can give us a lecture on the art of communication. Maybe we should have a suggestions box at meetings? What do you think? Honest to God, it's like pulling teeth with you lot!

September is the Groups Meeting – no charge and please bring your friends. It was excellent last year, great atmosphere and well done to Tina and the group leaders who set up their stalls. And, being as you're not paying to come in, you can afford a to



Committee Members: Mark Buckley (U3A Webmaster); Viv Manners (Membership Secretary); Kenny Bird (Raffles Organiser); Shelagh Nugent (Newsletter Editor).

buy a couple of raffle tickets can't you? See Kenny on the way in. I think there was mention of a bottle of whisky.

Stay cool and keep praying for rain. Anybody fancy a naked rain dance in the market square? OK, maybe not, it might frighten the clouds away.

Best wishes from Shelagh
shelaghnugent45@gmail.com

PS: There you go. I only had to mention the rain dance in the town square and down it came. Thank you to the clouds. A bit more would be appreciated if you can spare it.



Everybody enjoying the Social Meeting in August

My thoughts on the Quiz:-

It would have been better if we could have sat at smaller tables, and had a maximum number of 4 in a team. The team next to us consisted of about 8 and there was a lot of chatter etc. Having said that I thought the afternoon went off very well, and quite a change to have some obscure questions from the quizmaster!!

Nice cakes too.

Phil Cartwright