



u3a

Halesworth and District Newsletter - March 2025



Spring - Nearly Here!



J Van der Bowlen (1695 - 1725) Source - Arbol.com



Bulb fields - Keukenhof, Holland - Source JT



A bed of exotic tulips Keukenhof - Source JT



A bed of Crocuses - Halesworth Town Park

How idyllic winter appears in Van der Bowlen's 'Dutch Winter Scene', but this was far from the harsh reality of winter experienced by peasants, working long hours in cold and miserable conditions and in a flat wind-swept landscape. No wonder Spring was such a relief and certainly one reason for the serious cultivation of bulbs in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century. A source of income certainly, but what a wonderful harbinger of Spring they must have been.

The first real flower bulb region of the Netherlands was near the city of Haarlem, because it had a sandy soil where bulbs thrived. Haarlem became the Dutch city of flowers in the so called "Bollenstreek" (Bulb Region). The famous Keukenhof Gardens were opened in 1950, to be a showcase for the bulb industry, attracting thousands of visitors in mid April. Not to be outdone, the area around Spalding in Lincolnshire began its own bulb cultivation, at the end of the nineteenth century having similar soil conditions and an annual display.

But why not take a Spring walk in Halesworth's Town Park and Millennium Green, the largest in England? It may not be Keukenhof, but the Spring flowers and the variety of green may lift your spirits, in what has become an increasingly troubled world.

From the Chairwoman

This month we said “farewell and thank you” to our secretary Sharon Collins. Sharon was involved in many aspects of u3a policy; in particular developing the process and carrying out the many tasks necessary to enable our u3a to achieve registered charity status. We are grateful to Sharon for her significant contribution to the u3a and are pleased that although she has resigned from the committee, Sharon will remain an active member of the u3a.

I am able report that your new committee is settling in well and Connie Topping has taken over as Secretary from Sharon.

The Tuesday Film Club.. By popular demand, the next film to be shown on Tuesday 4th March starting at 2.00pm is *Tea With Mussolini*. It stars Judy Dench and Maggie Smith and includes stunning Tuscan scenery. It was rather chilly at the February showing, but I am assured that the Cut team will turn the heating on early this time. Nonetheless it’s never tropical in the auditorium so you may wish to wrap up!

Your u3a needs YOU!

Your u3a is looking for volunteers to help run our expanding and entirely voluntary organisation. We started up the **STAR** group a couple of years ago (*STAR stands for Small Tasks As Required*) and this group has provided vital and welcome support. Tasks include addressing envelopes, preparing leaflets for distribution and delivering leaflets and newsletters. We would appreciate some more helpers to join the STAR group and to help at events, be it moving furniture or taking notes or even counting members into the coach for our annual outing.

We are aware that several newer members who expressed interest in volunteering have not been contacted. Please do make contact again so that we can add you to our list of helpers.

If you can help the u3a whether regularly or occasionally please let our Membership Secretary know by email to mikehalesworthu3a@myyahoo.com. We would be most grateful



Coffee Hour is held on the last Friday of each month in the Cut Cafe, at The Cut Arts Centre, Halesworth and starting at 11:00 am. Everybody is welcome and it provides an opportunity for new members to meet the u3a team and find out more about what the u3a offers. Here are the forthcoming dates:

- March 28th**
- April 25th**

The Monthly Talks - 2.30 pm. These are free for u3a members. Non members £4



Tuesday March 18th. Fiona McSheehy
‘Saving Lives in Times of Crisis.’

Fiona is a humanitarian with thirty years experience supporting emergency responses globally. These include the Asian tsunami, earthquakes in Pakistan, Indonesia and Malawi, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, cyclones, floods, famine and conflict. She is currently the interim CEO of UK based charity Elrha - Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance. She will speak of her experience working with the Red Cross and Save the Children in war-torn countries



Tuesday 15th April 2025 Barbara Meyer
Seals in Lincolnshire and Norfolk

Since 2019, Barbara Meyer has published articles in national and regional magazines of her research into seals along parts of the east coast of England. Her talk covers the differences between seal sub-species in Lincolnshire and Norfolk and her study of the effect of visitors on breeding colonies in their habitat. Barbara will talk about efforts to help marine wildlife species survive.



20th May 2025. Christopher Hilton Benjamin Britten & Peter Pears at the Red House.

Christopher will talk about the composer Benjamin Britten; his partner the singer Peter Pears and the life that they shared together at their home the Red House in Aldeburgh. They were great collectors and the house is very much as they left it, with an archive of unparalleled richness that tells the stories of their professional lives and most of all gives us insight into the lives of a gay couple at a time when their relationship was illegal. Christopher will tell some of the stories from the archive, including young men, fast cars, post-war reconciliation, conflict with Soviet bureaucracy, and a cameo appearance from Queen Elizabeth II.

News from the Groups

In October, the Art Group made a visit to the Sainsbury Art Centre in Norwich. The ground floor contains the home collection of Sir Robert Sainsbury and his wife Lady Sainsbury. The home collection has works from four continents and is an eclectic mix of the Sainsbury private collection of modern art. Currently on show are works by Bacon Epstein, Moore, Pasmore, Hoyland and others.

Recent Meetings

November was a study of works including Hopper, Van Gogh and Grimshaw.

December - the life of Alfred Munnings.

January - Fauvism - a style of art that emerged in France in the early 1900s.

February's meeting was a visit to Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery.

Monthly meetings are in the Coop Community Room on the second Tuesday in the month from 10.00 am until 12.00 noon.



The Walking Group



As usual, we continue to walk up to five miles on the second Thursday of every month with lunch to follow for those wishing to stay on. Our walks this year have been around the Westleton / Dunwich Heath areas and Snape. As usual these have been led by experienced and willing members of the group, who have recently pre-walked the route. I am pleased to report that we no longer have a waiting list and are happy to invite those considering joining us to a 'taster', walking with us the following month. If you're interested please contact us through our website page. Go to https://halesworth.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/walking/



Shorter Distance Walking Group meets on the third Friday in the month starting at 11.00am. It is a friendly group, walking about two miles at a slower pace and is happy to accommodate dogs. We normally finish at a café or pub. The organisers welcome new members and anyone who could help with the planning of the walks. Please make contact with the groups' coordinator Jo Dorey on our u3a link.



The Local History Group opened its 2025 programme with a fascinating and rare tour of 'The Lodge of Prudence' in Halesworth Marketplace. We were made very welcome and given a talk on the history of freemasonry and learned much about the setting up and activities of the Halesworth Lodge and the building which is full of masonic artefacts and symbols. The present Lodge was a warehouse acquired from Roe & Co the department store in 1880.



Our future programme includes setting up more history walks for the town council, East Suffolk Lines and other U3A groups from outside Halesworth including the Beccles History Group. We are also preparing for a busy year of festivals and events, including VE Day celebrations, Heritage Week (as part of the national festival in September themed as 'Architecture') and a possible Ale Day event to promote Halesworth's brewing history. We will combine with the U3A Family History Group wherever possible as our interests often overlap. Alongside this we are developing our interactive street QGIS project and our oral history interviews. Combined with other current research projects, we are going to have a full and productive year and very visible at Halesworth events.



The Guitar Group meets twice a month.

Electric Guitar - 2nd Thursday of the Month,
4pm to 6pm, at Westhall Village Hall.

Acoustic Guitar - last Thursday of the Month,
4.30pm to 6.30pm, at The Community Room, The Coop, Halesworth.

Cost: Room hire

Are you interested in playing electric or acoustic guitar with a mixed ability cheerful and supportive group? We meet twice a month for an acoustic session, based on singing and accompanying a range of classic pop, blues and Americana from the last fifty years. Recent material includes *Horse with No Name*, *Blowin' in the Wind*, *Make Me Smile*, *Stuck in the Middle with You*. For an electric session of noisier rocking blues, rock 'n roll and Americana with this time with electric guitars, amps, vocal pa, and a drum machine, called 'Ginger'. Recent material includes *Smokestack Lightning*, *Highway 61*, *Blue Jean Blues*, *Hog For You Baby*, *Shake Your Money Maker*, *Riot In Cell Block 9*.

It would be an advantage to be at least a basic player and to have the relevant acoustic or electric guitar for the session. While we are a supportive and mixed ability group, the emphasis is on playing not teaching but we will offer advice on some theory and techniques where useful.



The Film Appreciation Society celebrated its first anniversary this January, and looked back at a very wide range of films watched and discussed during 2024 In December, the title was the Cher comedy *Moonstruck*, which had a romantic glow appropriate for the season. In January, we discussed the French fantasy film *Amelie*, and in February the Scottish 80's comedy *Local Hero*. By way of contrast, the March title will be the Jack Nicholson / Faye Dunaway 70's Noir classic *Chinatown*.

We were also pleased to see the launch of u3a FILM CLUB In January at the Cut, open to all members. One opportunity this provides is the chance to see some selected titles on the big screen, like *Local Hero*. If anyone would like to consider becoming a Film Appreciation member, please get in touch.

William Reiss at William.Reiss@btinternet.co.uk



The Lunch on Friday Group.

So far this year group have enjoyed lunches at The Queens Head, Bramfield and at The Golf Club, Halesworth.

Thanks to Cherie and David for organising the February lunch

Pause for thought

Yes - only at M&S !

As seen last summer by Monica



The Ukulele Group ended 2024 headlining a musical extravaganza at Holton Village Hall. The event raised £1400 for Halesworth Dementia Carers. After a busy year, the group enjoyed a Christmas lunch at The Angel and a 'bring and share lunch', at our last Tuesday strum before Christmas. This was a morning when members entertained each other with their individual 'party pieces'.



We have started the New Year with several learning sessions, including an introduction to the Reggae strum and later this month a workshop on blues music; all exciting stuff to keep our brains and fingers working.

We already have several bookings for this year, including Heveningham and Framingham shows. We have now set up a Facebook page, 'Halesworth Ukulele Band'. There you can see a video showing the band playing at the Musical Extravaganza, as well as a profile of one of our founder members. Past chairman of the u3a, Martin Stevens, was chosen by the 'name out of a hat' method. We plan to profile a different member each month. If you would like to come along and try your hand at playing a ukulele, use the link on our u3a website. We have several instruments we can offer on short term loan, before any expense is undertaken.



Stonechat



Kingfisher



Barnacle Geese



Water Pipit

Bird Watching Group. Since the previous newsletter we have visited RSPB North Warren in December with fifty species being recorded. This included more than a pintail; four species of gull and four species of geese. The white fronted goose was a new sighting for group.

In January at Southwold 36 species and muntjac were recorded. The highlights were a caspian gull and a flock of over four hundred barnacle geese, flying directly overhead.

RSPB Minsmere was the venue in February on a glorious sunny winter's day and although we split into groups to go round the reserve, we saw a total of sixty four species. The Island Mere group saw thirty species with superb views of a male kingfisher perching and fishing, and a marsh harrier hunting over the reeds close to the hide, We also had a rare sighting of a water pipit. The East Hide and Scrapes Group recorded fifty four species. This included three species of swan, ten species of ducks and many small birds.

The full lists can be found at [Bird Watching Group - Species Seen - Halesworth and District \(u3asite.uk\)](http://Bird Watching Group - Species Seen - Halesworth and District (u3asite.uk))



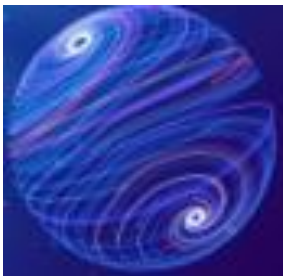
The Music Appreciation Group has settled well into its new home in Halesworth Library. We meet on the fourth Thursday of the month from 10.30 until 12.00 noon. Our themes are chosen by its members a year in advance and so far in our new home, we have looked at Maria Schneider-Grammy Award winning twenty first century composer and performer, whose compositions and performances embrace both jazz and classical music worlds.



After our Christmas lunch at The Low House in Laxfield, our first meeting in January featured the French composer Maurice Ravel. In contrast in February the eccentric and yet brilliant arranger and composer Percy Grainger was the focus.

For March we have a screening of the award winning film *A Heart in Winter* which explores complex relationships, and features music by Ravel.

We are a friendly group, using high quality audio/ visual equipment who enjoy learning about classical music in all its forms. There are no 'experts' and anyone interested is welcome to come for a free taster session. Our charge is £2 per session to cover the cost of the library hire. Further details, including our brochure are on our u3a website.



The Science Group programme for this year, chosen as always by its Members, is very varied and I hope appeals to everybody. Talks are given by members, although wanting to learn more about a topic doesn't mean you have to give a talk! We meet at 2pm in Halesworth Library on the 4th Thursday of the month.

In addition to a visit to the Darsham Astronomy group in March, we have a tour of Sizewell B planned for July. Our talks, range from food production, plastic films, climate issues to Solanacea (in their many iterations!), That only takes us to June.

Any u3a member interested is very welcome to join the group. Find us using the group tab on the u3a website. No scientific background needed just an interest in things scientific!

Halesworth 'Day of Dance'

The ninth 'Halesworth Day of Dance' will take place on Saturday, April 5th. This celebratory spectacular of dancing, music and costumes takes place throughout the town, from 11am until 4pm, starting with a parade and mass dancing in the Market Place. The streets will then be full of live musicians and dancers to be followed by an evening Ceildh at the newly refurbished Rifle Hall. Join over eighteen local dance groups including traditional Molly and Morris Dancers. It's a free and unique event for young and old. Don't miss it.!



'Ox Blood Mollies' Halesworth



'Gold Star' of Norwich



From The First Festival - 2017