



u3a

Halesworth and District Newsletter - June 2025



Not all history is Noise!



May was a reminder that history is often celebrated with much display and clamour. Firstly there was 'VE Day' early in the month and just a few days ago 'Memorial Day' in America. Both rightly commemorated our freedom achieved by the supreme sacrifice of others. Bunting could be seen in many towns across the country, together with ceremonies, parades and speeches. Halesworth, with its excellent 'History Trail', shows another rather quieter, but no less significant aspect of our history, by those who lived in the town and stood up for freedom, justice and the pursuit of greater knowledge of our world.

These plaques are testimony to those residents who are rightly a source of pride for Halesworth. George Lansbury, the Labour social reformer, was born in the town to a supervisor of railway track gangs. He went on to promote social justice and the advancement of women's rights. Priscilla Buxton was born in Cromer in 1808 and her maternal aunt was Elizabeth Fry. Priscilla was an activist for the great cause of the abolition of slavery and worked to present Parliament with a petition of 187,000 signatures. In 1834, Priscilla married Andrew Johnston, a fellow abolitionist, who later became manager of the family bank of Gurney's in Halesworth. They were married on the day the act emancipating slaves in the British colonies came into force, and they made Bank House their family home for twenty years. Priscilla was expected to run a house, produce a family and continue a life of philanthropic service, which indeed she steadfastly did, undoubtedly leading to her early death in 1852.



Source – National Portrait Gallery



Source – English Radical History



Source - Wikipedia

William Hooker was the first director of Kew Gardens. He was Regius Professor of Botany at Glasgow University, a great researcher, a fine teacher and amazingly combined all this with running a successful malt business in the town. A plaque alongside it is to James Hooker his son, who followed in his father's

footsteps, becoming the second director of Kew Gardens. Space does not permit any further images for sake of space, but James was not only a highly renowned botanist, but also a qualified doctor.

This opened his way to become a ship's surgeon, firstly on Ross's expedition to Antarctica, but more significantly on Darwin's expedition on the Beagle, which brought about a paradigm change in our understanding of evolution. What a voyage of discovery that was. Originally Darwin's findings were quietly kept to just a few close friends, for fear of the impact he knew it would have, but his theories led to the eventual publication of 'The Origin of Species'.

There is an amusing footnote to this. The English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams was related to Charles Darwin through his mother. After his clergyman father's death when he was two, the family moved back to their original home at Leith Hill Place. Once there, he was often taken on nature walks in the Surrey countryside by Darwin, who lived nearby. After one of these walks, the young Vaughan Williams asked his mother "Who is right, the Bible or Uncle Charles? To this, his mother gave the wonderful answer "They are both right dear, it's just that Uncle Charles says it took a little longer.

Chairwoman's Report

In my February letter to you I included a plea for more volunteers. Happily several people have responded and I look forward to meeting the 'noble few' very soon. However your committee is looking ahead and considering succession, because under our constitution several committee members will have to step back in the next couple of years I am pleased to report that there are new groups starting up including a third walking group and our volunteer groups.

Your committee are keen to simplify and modernise our processes. With the complete lack of a bank within ten miles, we are investigating the potential for offering on-line membership applications and renewals. Now that we are a registered charity we are also looking into introducing a Gift Aid scheme.

This year's coach outing is planned for Tuesday July 8th with a visit travel to Lavenham. Full details about booking and timings etc once finalised will be sent out shortly. There will be an opportunity to join a guided walk with Jane Gosling who spoke to us at the Cut last year. Jane recently featured on a BBC 2 programme about Lavenham.

Monica Edmonds.



Source –'Visit England'



Source - 'Love Lavenham'

Dates for your Diary

Tuesday 17th June at 2.30 pm - Britain's Great Film Makers Our very own William Reuss, organiser of the popular u3a Film Club, will be telling us about Michael Powell & Emeric Pressburger - Britain's greatest film-making team". William will talk about the brash outgoing English director Michael Powell and quiet Hungarian scriptwriter Emeric Pressburger. Together they produced some of the greatest British films ever made including: 'A Matter of Life and Death' with David Niven, 'I Know Where I'm Going' with Wendy Hiller, and the ballet classic 'The Red Shoes' and many others. This promises to be a fascinating talk and very apt given the recent celebration of the 80th Anniversary of VE Day.

Tuesday 15th July 2025 at 2.30 pm - Three Victorian Paintings



Derby Day by William Frith – Tate Gallery

We welcome back Roger Simpson who will help us understand the complexity and depth of meaning in Victorian narrative painting. The paintings are **Work**, by Ford Madox Brown, 1852-1865, **The Awakening Conscience**, by William Holman Hunt, 1827-1910 and **The Derby Day**, 1856-58 by William Powell Frith. Roger explains that "our ancestors looked at paintings to understand what they said, not merely what they looked like". This talk will take place at the Cut Arts Centre starting at 2.30 pm.

Film Club Tuesday 3rd June 2.30 pm - I know where I am Going! (U). For June we will be screening Michael Powell & Emeric Pressburger's haunting romantic fable. Starring Wendy Hiller, a headstrong young urban woman heads north by train to the Isle of Mull to marry her wealthy fiancée on his island. However, bad weather and the attentions of local RAF airman Roger Livesey start to upset her carefully laid plans. Very romantic, breathtaking Scottish scenery, that catchy song, and an appearance by a very young Petula Clark all add to a classic of British cinema, making a welcome return to the big screen. "I Know Where I'm Going!" will also be one of the films featured in the **illustrated u3a talk about Powell & Pressburger** at the Cut on Tuesday 17th June. Tickets are available at the Cut Box Office on the day. Why not meet up for a bite and a coffee before or after the screening in the café?

Friday 27th June at 11.00 am - Coffee Hour at the Cut Café



February. A site visit to Norwich Castle Museum and Art gallery to view the 'Turner and Landscape' exhibition.

March. Discussion of 'The Fauves' held at the Coop Community Meeting Room.

April. The agreed topic was comments and observations of the current exhibition at the Cut Gallery.

May. A discussion of The Pre – Raphaelite Brotherhood.

June. Meetings over the next couple of months may involve site/gallery visits so please contact the Group Leader on the u3a website.

Lawn Bowls. The u3a Lawn Bowls group is up and running for the summer season. Whether you are a keen bowls player or a total novice, this friendly group has vacancies. Tuition and equipment are provided; the group meet at the Halesworth Angel Bowls Club at the top of Dairy Hill in Halesworth. Contact Ben Cardwell benjaminjon44@gmail.com for further information



Handicraft Group. Now is the season of summer holidays, outings and the gardens need a little 'tlc'.

I feel it would be sensible to take a break for the summer months.

I would like to start our group again in the Autumn.

I am suggesting meeting up on 22nd September

With kind regards Melita Rouse- Skeet

The Science Group continues to tackle a wide range of topics. We started with an explanation of the whys, wherefores and benefits of the imminent change of landlines to the digital network. Then we visited the Darsham Astronomy Group, a very informative trip which links with the penultimate talk of the year on the moon, interplanetary travel and living on Mars. Another broad theme for the year is climate and weather and its effects on the planet in the context of adequate food production and the need to maintain / increase biodiversity. Obviously, this is also connected to different methods of energy production, so for our **July talk** we are visiting Sizewell B and in **August** we have a talk on environmentally friendlier fracking.

Plastics are an enduring issue (pun intended) – love them or loathe them, we can't go back to the non-plastic days. In our **April talk** we heard about the manufacture and uses of a wide variety of plastic films and the point was made that degradability was actually undesirable for many uses (eg field crop protection, food packaging etc.) and recycling is expensive and energy intensive. Our **June** talk is on the nightshade family of plants, an extraordinarily diverse range without which we'd not have chips, cigarettes or passata and Renaissance Italians wouldn't have taken certain risks in pursuit of 'beauty'.

We meet in the library at 2.00 pm on the 4th Thursday of the month – new members are always welcome – see the Groups Page on u3a website.



The Thoroughfare re-imagined. Source Halesworth and District Museum

The Local History Group has a busy summer ahead, with involvement in the Ale Day (14 June) and guided walks for Visit Halesworth, East Suffolk Lines and other groups. Some of us went on an enjoyable history stroll in Great Yarmouth organised by the Walpole Old Chapel History Group. Our Quay Street group are preparing for their new guided walk, showcasing their fascinating research on Quay Street and the brewing and maltings heritage of the town. This will be unveiled during the Heritage Open Days in September, where our group will be at the I-Chamaeleon shop, promoting Halesworth's heritage as well as running family history sessions and guided walks. Open days at Bank House and many other events will feature. Towards the autumn we are excited to be preparing to launch our interactive digital project, which will deliver the fruits of our streets, buildings and people research onto a multi-layered interactive map of Halesworth.



Jazz Group. The Jazz Group has started again and holding its meetings on the third Monday of each month in the afternoon. The next meeting will be on 16th June at 2.00 pm, as before in Halesworth Library. New members are welcome. More information is on our page on the Halesworth U3A website.

If you help or run a group, please look at your group's page on the web site and ensure it is correct. The venue, status (Active, Dormant, etc.) and contact details need to be up to date. If your **Group** page has incorrect information please **send a correction to our Website Manager** whose contact email is at the foot of the Contacts Page of our website

NB. The editor expresses his thanks to Lisa Hyde (History Group) for the valuable information on Priscilla Buxton



Blyth River Blues Band, a spin off from the U3A Guitar Group, has recently been described as ‘Suffolk’s Finest Rockin’ Blues Band’. It has played several gigs already this year, including a Super Saturday at The Racehorse and The Rumburgh Buck, all in one day in April. We have also performed at Rumburgh again on May Day and at the Lowfest Beer Festival in Laxfield. Please check our Facebook page, which also now features a classic video by Sid Skint of us playing live:
<https://www.facebook.com/blythriverbluesband/>

All the latest dates including Halesworth Ale Day on June 14th, are on the website. We’re still booking into 2025 with only a couple of dates remaining...Hope to see you there.

Guitar Group (The Swan Uppers) Active, open to new members with at least basic playing ability

Two groups;

Electric Guitar - Second Thursday of the Month, 4.00 pm to 6.00 pm at Westhall Village Hall.

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

ACTIVITIES. 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. Alternatively, we have an electric session of noisier rocking blues rock’n’roll and Americana, but this time with electric guitars, amps, vocal pa, and a drum machine. 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 continues to flourish, and looked back at an intriguing range of films during Spring 2025 In March, the title was the 1970s’ thriller **The Conversation**, made more poignant by the recent death of star Gene Hackman, in one of his finest performances. The Japanese set **Perfect Days** by German director Wim Wenders, provided much discussion with its deceptively simple storyline about a Tokyo cleaner. In May, there was the timely discussion about **Conclave**, a film which apparently was also closely watched by the Vatican’s cardinals.



We were also pleased to see the success of the new u3a film club at the Cut, open to all members. So far we have screened **Grand Budapest Hotel**, **Local Hero**, **Tea with Mussolini**, **The Good Liar** and **Fabulous Baker Boys**. A couple of these titles were nominated by u3a members. If anyone would like to consider becoming a Film Appreciation member, do get in touch. William.Reiss@btinternet.com

Bird Watching Group. In March the group visited Iken Cliff. The weather was glorious and a total of thirty eight species were recorded including lots of wigeon, curlew and oystercatchers, together with a harbour and a grey seal.. April was a visit to the Millenium Green in Halesworth, when thirty species were recorded, which was a surprise to some. They included green and great spotted woodpecker, treecreeper and greenfinch and four species of butterfly. Thanks to Lee for leading the group. Wenhaston Marsh and Heath was the May venue, when thirty one species were recorded. It was a delightful walk in a varied habitat and the bird song was spectacular. The nightingale was singing, the cuckoo was calling and there were both whitethroat and lesser whitethroat in the hedgerow. Thanks to Graham for leading the group.



Wenhaston Heath



Cuckoo



Nightingale



Whitethroat

Ukulele Group. Since the beginning of the year we have been learning new songs and strumming patterns, revisiting our song books and enjoying old favourites, some of which have been reworked for our 2025 programme. We have been out and about, playing at the Halesworth Day of Dance in April, where we were joined by ukulele players from other local groups. It was a glorious sunny day and we joined forces again, later in the month, to play at The Rumburgh Buck's beer festival. We also entertained the local branch of Suffolk Sight at their new venue, the Co-op Community Room. We have been invited to return for their November meeting.

On May 13th, the anniversary of the day we were formed, we celebrated eleven years of making music together. Sadly several members missed the event because they were away, working, or on holiday. This year we are playing on both days at the Heveningham Hall Country Fair at the end of June, the Cancer Research shop at I-Chameleon and also at Fressingfield Produce Market in July. We are booked for tje upcoming Framlingham Show, the Huntingfield Festival of Music in August, and Henham Park Steam Rally in September. So, plenty for us to prepare for but meanwhile we can continue enjoying playing and learning together on Tuesday mornings.

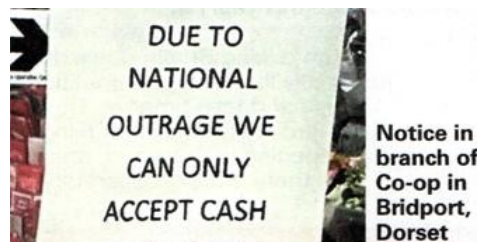


The Climate Change Group

The first meeting of the climate change group will be in early June. If anyone is interested in joining this group or would like further information, please contact Monica Edmonds via the Contacts page of our web site in the first instance.

The Rifle Hall. We have used the Rifle Hall as a venue for many years. Unfortunately the hall has some structural problems, which have caused us to cease meeting there temporarily. Some members continue to use the hall. However until the insurance position has been clarified and we have approval from our insurers, **activities at the hall are not covered by the u3a insurance policy.** As soon as we receive information about the safety of the hall and the insurance cover available, we will be able to consider resuming activities there. We hope to be back there very soon.

And finally-



Source - 'Private Eye'

Next edition deadline is 25th August in **ARIAL 11 please to** halesworthu3anews@gmail.com