



u3a

Halesworth and District Newsletter - June 2026



A staycation summer?

In early May, the BBC TV news reported that summer holidays might well be different this year, due to the war in Iran disrupting holiday plans to Europe and beyond. It has pushed up prices for flights and is causing long delays and cancellations. Booking.com and Airbnb are already seeing a steep increase in demand for UK holidays and inevitably a rise in prices here too.

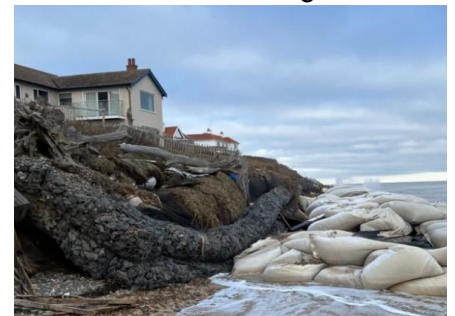
So, where do visitors go if they want a holiday in the UK? Our region not only has the sea, but unlike many continental seaside hotspots, it has a wide range of additional attractions. There is of course the perennial problem of the north east wind, necessitating a wind shield sturdily planted on the left side of your chosen spot, but sadly this year, our area has had some bad press. The Sizewell C project with its road closures and massive 'alterations' to a much-loved countryside is well underway. There is of course the promise of restoration at the end of the project where possible, but it's something many probably won't live to see. Worse still was the amount of recent serious coastal erosion in Norfolk and Suffolk and making the news.



Source - BBC



Source - BBC



Source - JT

However, as we know, with the advent of cheap flights and ready-made packages in the late 60's, the public's appetite for more exotic places was ignited and home-grown holidays with their 'hit and miss weather' spurred people on to sample new horizons. With it went many of the associated seaside traditional attractions and activities. We are old enough to remember these and featured below are some of the pastimes familiar to many of us as children.



Source - My Brighton and Hove



Source - Wikimedia



Source - Getty Images

Whilst children played on the beach despite how cold the sea was, parents were more circumspect. A deckchair and a newspaper would do, along with a knotted handkerchief for dad to protect the balding scalp. Rarely would parents move, unless for a tray of tea or ice-creams all round. They were unlikely to be cajoled into the sea and only then, dad with his trousers rolled up and definitely no beach sports! Children didn't mind. These were good times.



Source - Dreamtime



Source -The Guardian

From your Chairwoman

We are looking forward to an exciting summer with plenty of activities planned for our u3a. As I write, the second Film Day of the year is approaching and we are grateful to William Reiss for initiating and leading the monthly Film Club and the Film Days. Our film fans are privileged to benefit from his knowledge and expertise.

Planning is well advanced for our group visit to Norwich Castle and Museum on July 21st. Having seen two talks by Curator and Archaeologist Dr Tim Pestell, we are confident that the refurbished Castle will be well worth visiting. However, all the available tickets have now been sold. Your committee will be discussing whether or not to run a repeat outing later in the year. We do need to consider our budget before subsidising a second tour. We expect to plan some additional days out during the year, possibly using the Community Bus. However these will be at cost.

Last week I attended the AGM of ESTA (East Suffolk Transport Association). One of the committee members made a plea to the audience for more volunteers to keep that worthy organisation going. In particular they needed members with an understanding of modern IT and social media to help them keep up to date and accessible. That plea sounded very familiar to me. The world is changing and fewer people seem to have the capacity or will to volunteer in their community. Unfortunately, in these straightened times when the 'State' must do more with less, there is a greater need than ever for volunteers to keep local initiatives afloat.

Your u3a also needs volunteers. We need '**doers**' on the committee; people with vision on how to take new ideas forward, the energy to carry initiatives through and to improve existing activities. We need someone to administer our membership records database as well as a person who enjoys using social media to manage our Facebook presence. We can also always do with more people to help out at our monthly meetings.

Our AGM will be held in October so please consider whether **you** would be able to help our u3a by giving a little time and sharing your knowledge and if so, do contact one of the committee members. Similarly, if you know of a fellow member whom you believe has talents that would be useful, please encourage them to come forward. Without a committee there's no u3a!

Monthly Talk for June. Tuesday 18th June - 2pm at the Cut. Free to members - others £4.



Garden Bugs. Cohabit, Control, or Conserve. Dr Ian Bedford has worked at the John Innes Centre, where he became head of its Entomology Department. Apart from giving talks, he regularly holds plant pest clinics at garden centres and has appeared on BBC Breakfast and Gardener's World. His talk will explain the importance of the insects and other invertebrates we find in our gardens. Biodiversity is declining rapidly throughout the world and it is therefore vitally important that, where possible, we protect the wildlife within our gardens.

His talk will explain the importance of the insects and other invertebrates living in our gardens. Biodiversity is declining rapidly throughout the world and it is therefore vitally important that, where possible, we protect the wildlife within our gardens. This promises to be an informative presentation.



The Summer Bowls Club. Why not come along to our weekly bowls session on a **Wednesday afternoon between 2.00pm and 4.00 pm** and get active in a friendly, relaxed environment during the months between May and September at Halesworth Angel Bowls Club? It's a fantastic way to boost both your physical and mental wellbeing. No special clothing required, just flat soled footwear. All equipment is provided. Free instruction is given. Relax afterwards with a cup of tea and a biscuit. Come along, have fun and stay active.



The Film Appreciation Group continues to attract new members. Oscar-winners seemed to be the keynote from the recent titles chosen and discussed. 2026's champion was Paul Thomas Anderson's ONE BATTLE AFTER ANOTHER, an epic which attracted a wide range of plaudits and brickbats within the group. In April, it was Elia Kazan's ON THE WATERFRONT, starring Marlon Brando, with discussion rooted in the context of the 1950's McCarthy witch-hunts, and whether the film endorses the theme of betraying one's colleagues. May brought the 1970's classic, ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST and sparked a debate around issues of psychiatric care.

Film Club at The Cut, to which all u3a members are invited, is on the first Tuesday of each month. In March we screened the charming Italian comedy MID-AUGUST LUNCH, which proved very popular. Its sequel THE SALT OF LIFE will be shown this summer. For April, it was Ian McKellan's 1930's era RICHARD III, much admired by those who saw it. The Member's Choice for June will be MY OLD LADY, starring Maggie Smith and Kristen Scott-Thomas, two popular stars with club members. This is screened on the 2nd June at 2.00pm.



Photo - courtesy of Halesworth and District Museum.

The Local History Group is joining forces with the Family History Group to bring a fantastic array of events to Heritage Open Days from 11th to 20th September. Planning is underway on many new and fascinating events including our History Hub at the Magical Emporium from 17th to the 19th September. There you can enjoy displays, Halesworth history map sessions, family history advice, local history talks and workshops. The Quay Street group members are giving a talk at the United Reform Church and conducting a walk on the subject of everyday working lives, which is this year's theme. The group will also conduct tours of Bank House, a guided cemetery walk, an interior tour of the almshouses above our art gallery and the Masonic Lodge of Prudence. Our museum will host events and displays. All events can be found on the Heritage Days website directory of events launching on 1 June.



Lunch on Friday Group. Lunches have been enjoyed at; The Bell, Walberswick, The White Hart, Blythburgh and The Queen, Dennington. Thanks to Sharon, Clive and Mary for organising the venues



The Jazz Group. By the time you read this, it will be a whole year since the Jazz Group changed direction. We started on the principle that we would take it in turns to run our monthly sessions based on our own tastes. The result has been an extraordinary diversity of music and I think everyone would agree that we have all been introduced to jazz we would never otherwise have heard. More recently and quite spontaneously, we have introduced another innovation, taking on responsibility for a particular topic and inviting others to contribute. This has gone well. We meet once a month on the third Monday afternoon in Halesworth Library at 2.00pm. We can use the U3A's hi-fi and we have recently added the vinyl LP to the media we can play. For further details, take a look at our page on the Halesworth U3A website.



The Art Appreciation Group. Following on from our March meeting, we continued to study female artists and in particular visited the exhibition 'Come into the garden Maud' which was being held at Hadleigh Old School Gallery, featuring the work of Joan Warburton. Our May meeting took place as a visit to Snape Maltings where, although both of the Winch and Dove Galleries were between shows, we as were still able to see work by approximately ten different artists and makers. Our next meeting on 9th June will be back at the Council Meeting Room at 10.00am where we will consider work and artists from The Bauhaus.



Photo – Monica Edmonds

The Climate and Environment Discussion Group meets on the last Monday of the month at the Old Courthouse (aka the Council Offices) in London Road Halesworth. We have a programme of topics that we research and discuss. Where practicable with such a broad topic, we focus on Halesworth and the Blythe Valley in the period 1950 to 2050, but we also like to take the world in view. Recent meetings have discussed: What is likely to happen to Suffolk climate-wise? Climate driven migration of people; a Complete COP Out (about COP 30) 'What's happening to the AMOC, (will there be icebergs off Southwold?) and Selling Net Zero. Still to come in June, Climate and Environmental Good News and in July, Marine Impacts of Current Climate Events.

If you are concerned by reports you read in the press or see on TV and social media, or wonder what life will be like for future generations, why not come along and join the discussions? Contact the Group Coordinator via the Halesworth u3a website.



The Scrabble Group, meets in the Cut monthly on the second Wednesday of the month, commencing at 1.30pm. The aim is the enjoy the game with like-minded people. Refreshments are available from the Cut cafe half way through the two hour playing session. We do this to support the cafe as no charge is made for using the venue. If you are interested, please contact the organiser, Jill Daines on the u3a email link.



The Guitar Group – The Swan Uppers. 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 included 'Horse With No Name', 'Blowin' In The Wind', 'Make Me Smile', 'Stuck In The Middle With You'. **For the electric session** it's noisier rocking blues, rock'n'roll and Americana but using 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' and 'Riot In Cell Block'. It would be an advantage to be at least a basic player and to have the relevant acoustic or electric guitar for the session. Whilst 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.

For further Information contact the Guitar Group Leader via the u3a website.

The U3A Guitar Group spin-off The Blyth River Blues Band, who have recently been described as 'Suffolk's Finest Rockin' Blues Band', has played many gigs so far this year including The Rumburgh Buck, Halesworth Bowls Club, a fundraiser at Badingham, the Henham Country Show, Rumburgh May Day and dates coming up at The Star, Wenhaston, Blues Night at Sweffling, Halesworth Ale Day, The Racehorse, The White Swan, Halesworth, Framlingham and Cambridge

Country Shows. For all the latest dates, etc visit our u3a website or Facebook on:

<https://www.facebook.com/blythriverbluesband>

PAT Testing of Electrical Equipment

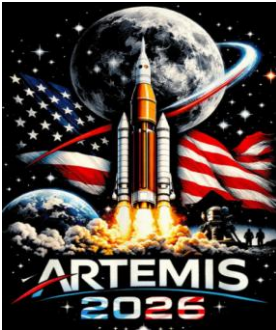


Your committee have selected an electrician who will test electrical equipment used by Halesworth u3a. These tests are a mandatory requirement as well as a sensible precaution to ensure the safety of our members. Depending on the items in question these tests may be annual or at wider intervals. The testing day for 2026 is Friday 5th June.

If you use electrical equipment in your u3a group, please consider whether this should be tested. Items would include laptops, projectors, kettles used by a group, including anything with a plug, such as a phone or laptop charger. Most of these items only need testing every 2 to 4 years, however it is a legal requirement to do so. Electric kettles used by group members in their own home are the liability of the host and are not included. However a peripatetic kettle that travels with a group would qualify!

NB Arrangements are in hand to test the equipment stored at the library.

If you have equipment that you believe should be included in the tests please contact Monica Edmonds without delay and certainly before 5th June, via the contact page of our website



The Science Group programme, has proved very topical! Starting with the Science of Transgender, then Trust in Science and on to Nuclear Power Stations (partly ‘how we got to Sizewell C and where we go from here’). In the second quarter we started with ‘AI for everyday use’ showing how getting the most from AI is a two-way exchange (tell it a bit about yourself and the way you prefer information presented, then ask the question) and by the time you read this we’ll have covered aspects of the moon, the Artemis II programme and the potential for Martian travel (not necessarily what was envisaged by the film ‘The Martian’). In June, we will hear about microbes in relationship to our bodies an ever-present topic! In July we have a field trip to the Quadram Centre in Norwich Research Park (healthy ageing is a key part of their research) and by August we will have learned about Explosives.

New members are always welcome. You don’t have to have a science background, just an interest in it. We meet monthly on 4th Thursday (except December), in the gallery area of the library. The meeting starts at 2:00 pm and the front side door is open by 1:30pm. If you would like to join the group, please contact the coordinator via the U3A website groups page where you can also find transcripts of the talks from 2026 and previous years.

Bird Watching Group. Our meeting in March took us to SWT Carlton Marshes, ably led by Lee. We recorded 53 species including redwing, several species of duck, gull and small birds. Chinese water deer, muntjac and hare were also seen. Iken was our next venue, always a delight, where we recorded 33 species and 2 grey seals, including tree -creeper, water rail, wigeon and marsh harrier.

In May, we made a return visit to SWT Martlesham Wilds, led by Martin. The bird song was glorious and we were lucky enough to both hear and see a cuckoo. Nightingales were singing, together with whitethroat, greenshank and whimbrel to name a few of the ‘new to the group’ species this year.



Whitethroat



Water Rail



Whimbrel



Cuckoo

And finally, can we forget the association of the British seaside without a mention of the salacious postcards sold alongside the buckets and spades, ice creams and the candy floss? To say that young minds might be puzzled by what they saw would be an understatement! This is unlikely to be the situation today with the explosion of the internet into their lives and some of recent terrible consequences. So here is reminder of how some of us muddled through to learn, eventually about ‘the birds and the bees!



Source - Post Office Museum and Ebay

