



u3a

Halesworth and District Newsletter - September 2026



It's called Summer Madness!

Every year in late Summer, in a village on the northern edge of Sardinia, a special race takes place. The starting point is the town square and the course proceeds down a steep slope to the sea. To enter you must make your own cart powered simply by gravity with homemade steering, but brakes are optional. You will stop when you reach the bottom, fall off, or the cart falls apart! Crash helmets are not compulsory even though collisions are numerous. It goes on all afternoon until after several descents the winner is the one who has travelled the furthest. The whole town turns out to enjoy the joyful mayhem.



Source - JT

Surely the English would not take part in anything like that? Well not in the same way, and certainly a lot less complicated. Every year in the Kent village of Coxheath, there is custard pie throwing competition. The 'pies' are made with flour and water to an official recipe and must all be of the same diameter. The two teams line up behind red lines and are separated by a distance measured of course, in feet and inches. An umpire is on hand to see fair play and a score is kept of direct hits, with the face having a top mark of 6!

In May on Cooper's Hill in Gloucestershire, there is the annual cheese race. The idea is simple. Just launch a wheel of local cheese down the hill and set off after it. The mayhem that follows produces a winner who may or may not have cracked ribs or a broken limbs at the finishing line. It is open to all comers and such is the notoriety of the race that film stuntmen have even taken up the challenge. A recent American observer was heard to say "if you decide to take part in that, you must have a good health service!"

Here in Suffolk, we go for a much softer option. Every year in Woodbridge, there is the River Deben Mud Race. Started some ten years ago, it is organised by the local running club, 'Just for a bit of fun'. At low tide there is mud a plenty, so you can fall over, get stuck, or experience the ultimate catastrophe of losing your shoes. Great fun is evidently had by all and money raised is given to local charities.

So come on Halesworth. How about a bit of summer madness next year?



Source - Away Resorts



Source - YouTube



Source - Facebook

From your Chairwoman

September is membership renewal month, and I hope that you have enjoyed the past year enough to renew your u3a subscription.

We modernise in incremental steps. Last year we initiated on-line applications, this year we hope to accept payment by credit and debit cards. For the first time for some years, we will hold a **Membership Morning on Tuesday 1st September in the Coop Community Room from 10.00am until 2.00pm** at which I hope there will be a functioning card reader. As with all technology there are numerous points of failure, despite our best endeavours. A weak phone or internet signal, recalcitrant software, flat batteries are all possibilities on the day!

This year we have had some notable monthly speakers including a memorable visit from Stephen Sugden who explained chiropractic for horses, with a demonstration on Barney the labrador and from Professor Ian Bedford, who took us on a tour of garden bugs both beneficial and unwelcome. Our very successful coach outing to Norwich Castle was the result of the enthusiastic and informative talk by Dr Tim Pestell, curator of Norwich Castle Museum.

There are another 3 illustrated talks to come before the turn of the year and of course our group activities will resume in September.

Our AGM will be held on Tuesday 20th October at 2pm before the monthly talk which starts at 2:30pm.

Your u3a needs volunteers for the committee, people who are 'doers', people with vision to propose new ideas, the energy to carry initiatives through and consolidate and support our existing activities. Specific roles we are looking to fill include Chair, Membership Records Database Manager, Facebook Expert, Publicity Manager and Newsletter Distributor. We look forward to receiving your nominations, but please remember that the nominee has to agree.

Monica Edmonds - Chairwoman

1. Chair

In brief, to ensure that the u3a fulfils its responsibilities as required by the Charity Commission including: manage committee meetings and the AGM as per our constitution, ensuring that the governance of the u3a complies with our constitution, that our policies are maintained and follow relevant guidance, to monitor the financial management of the u3a, provide strategic direction to the committee, encourage engagement with the membership and be available to individual members. I will be pleased to provide a fuller description on request.

2. Beacon Administrator

The **basic requirement** is for someone who is comfortable using IT and managing on-line records. As Beacon holds members' personal data, the administrator must understand and apply the GDPR principles. The administrator must have regard for the policies of the u3a, especially those regarding governance, security and email. The separation of duties principle requires that the administrative function is **not** carried out by a person with financial responsibilities for the u3a such as a Treasurer, deputy Treasurer, bookkeeper.

Time required: at present probably an hour a week maximum. **This is not a committee role.** However, the administrator should report to or meet with the Officers from time to time.

3. Email news person

The **basic requirement** is for someone who is comfortable sending information by email and is well organised and good at remembering dates! The **monthly email to members** is intended to remind members of forthcoming events and send our members news from the groups including opportunities for new groups. The **email news writer** will be sending the news-mail using Beacon and full training will be provided. It's not difficult! The news writer will be introduced to key providers of content. **This need not be a committee role**, but would suit someone with a modicum of curiosity and the ability to write succinctly about not a lot!

4. Newsletter distribution

We are fortunate to have a newsletter editor who compiles four newsletters each year. These are produced and distributed electronically to all members who have an email address.

(a) The **first requirement is for a person who is confident using email** to receive and send out the newsletter using the Beacon mailing system.

(b) The second requirement is for **someone who can print or arrange the printing** of the required number of paper newsletters. The newsletters must then be **posted or hand delivered** to eight members in reasonable time. These two tasks can either be combined or kept separate. These need not be committee roles.

5. Press, media & communications lead: a committee role.

The key purposes of this role are to:

- maintain and increase the visibility of our u3a, including through local free press publications and local social media sites.
- inform non-members of our existence and the events programme.
- keep u3a members informed about current developments and forthcoming events.

NB More information is available for each role and the current postholders are available to explain their roles in detail. Please contact the Chairwoman for more information using the Contact page on our website: <https://halesworth.u3asite.uk/contact/>

The Monthly Talks. All commence at 2.00pm in The Cut Arts Centre.

Free to members. Non-members £4.



Tuesday 15th September. Big Cats Around the Globe. An illustrated talk by Barbara Meyer.

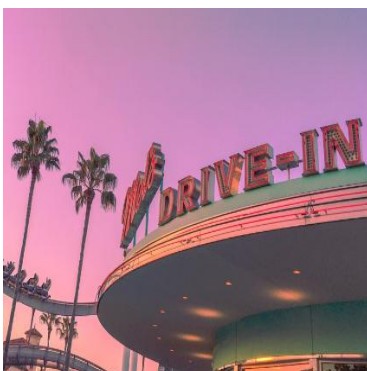
We will be taken on a journey around the globe, exploring the category 'big cats', where they live, what are their situations and problems in their natural habitat'. She will also describe the conservation efforts to aid the fight against extinction.



Tuesday 20th October. William Lindsay, MP- Cabin Boy to Shipping Magnate. Talk by William Lindsay

My great-great grandfather progressed from a penniless orphaned cabin boy to shipping magnate and member of Parliament. After nine years at sea, he became a shipbroker and shipowner. His ships were involved in emigration to Australia and Canada, the Crimean War, and the American Civil War. His diaries in the National Maritime Museum are full of anecdotes of famous Victorians whom he met, ranging from Brunel, Dickens, Disraeli, Lincoln and Florence Nightingale.

Please note that this talk is preceded by the Annual General Meeting at 2.00pm.



Tuesday 17th November. The Golden Age of 1970's Hollywood. A talk by William Reiss.

Though the classic films of the 1930's and 40's like 'The Wizard Of Oz' and **Casablanca** etc, are still widely loved and rightly admired. It can also be claimed that the 1967 to 1980 New Hollywood Era was just as impressive. For this brief period, many film-makers themselves wrestled control from the moribund studios, and this freedom enabled a new, exciting and personal approach to moviemaking to emerge. In this illustrated lecture, William Reiss will outline how the 70's decade of **Cabaret, American Graffiti, Jaws Taxi Driver and Annie Hall** formed another golden Hollywood era.

Some images of our visit to Norwich Castle - Tuesday 21st July.



The royal bedchamber



The story of the castle - video display



Part of the tea pot collection



Tuesday 1st September- Film Club at The Cut 2.00pm. The Piano (15) 120 minutes 1993.

This month's film is Jane Campion's multi-Oscar winning classic *The Piano*. A mute Scottish lady Ada (Holly Hunter) and her daughter Flora (Anna Paquin) arrive in a remote part of 19th century New Zealand for an arranged marriage to Alasdair Stewart (Sam Neill). However, his refusal to accept the piano she brought pushes her into a complex and passionate deal with neighbour George (Harvey Keitel). A haunting atmosphere with beautiful cinematography and a memorable score by Michael Nyman has made *The Piano* a film for all ages. Rated ***** by The Times, The Guardian and the New York Times.

Tickets for members available at the Cut Box Office on the day for a donation. Why not meet up for lunch or a coffee beforehand?

The September film is the opener for the ongoing **Film Appreciation Group's monthly meetings**. The group continues to grow, with many stimulating discussions on a range of films. In June, we looked at Hitchcock's *Shadow of Doubt*, and this prompted a debate on the still controversial *Blue Velvet* in July.



Kurling sessions start again on Thursday 24th September from 2.00 to 4.00 pm in Westhall Village Hall. Kurling is an indoor fun game. You don't have to be super fit to play or learn any complicated rules. The hall is a very welcoming venue. Please wear soft soled shoes.

Normally we pay £5.00 a session, but why not come along and join us for a free trial? If you need a lift or could offer one, please let me know. For further information please contact me on the message board on our u3a website. Sandy Clisby.

The Art Appreciation Group visited the Sainsbury Art Centre in Norwich. Once again, a whole morning visit isn't enough time to take in all the centre has to offer. Our August meeting at the Council Office Meeting Room saw a good discussion on the topic of sculpture. In September we will be making a visit to Ipswich to view and discuss Constable's 'Haywain'.



As part of the year-long **Constable 250** Celebrations at Ipswich Borough Council's historic Christchurch Mansion, **The Hay Wain** leaves its home in the National Gallery London, to travel to Suffolk for the very first time. There are also unprecedented key loans from the Tate, V&A, Royal Academy, the National Galleries of Scotland and also private collections.



Ukulele Group. We gave performances throughout the summer at Heveningham Hall, Fressingfield, Huntingfield and Framlingham. There were great audiences. One commented that he loved our playing as it helped him feel young again. We feel the same and that is why we get together every week.

Bird Watching Group Our June meeting was a return visit to the Woodland Trust site at Pound Farm. A diverse site of broadleaved trees, ancient woodland, wild flower meadows, hedgerows, ponds and grassy tracks. Although we didn't see many species, the bird song was glorious. Nightingales, song thrushes, blackcap and garden warbler to name just a few. Several species of butterflies and insects were spotted. Thanks to Martyn for leading the walk.

In July we visited RSPB Minsmere at the East Hide and the coastal path. The scrapes were full of birds and the noise was tremendous. The terns were swooping about and the Spoonbills made an appearance. Roseate Tern, Spotted Redshank and nine others were new species for the group this year. There were also lots of Butterflies, Dragonflies, Damselflies and Green-eyed Flower bees.

In August we walked along the river at Blythburgh, again led by Martyn. This was better than expected for a morning in August, with thirty six species being recorded and common sandpiper and common tern added to the group list for this year. We also spotted a tiger moth in the hedgerows.

The waiting list is always increasing, so if anyone is able to start another group please get in touch via the website.



Garden Warbler



Roseate Tern



Spoonbill



Guitar Group. If you are interested in playing either acoustic or electric guitar, please contact us for the details in the groups section on the u3a website.

The Blyth River Blues Band is a 'spin off' from the guitar group, recently described as 'Suffolk's finest rockin' blues band'. We have played many gigs so far this year including at The Rumburgh Buck, Halesworth Bowls Club, a fundraiser at Badingham, Henham Country Show, Rumburgh May Day. Our forthcoming events are at The Star, Wenham, Blues Night at Sweffling, The White Swan Halesworth, Ale Day in Halesworth, and shows in Framlingham and Cambridge.

Photographic Group



These images were taken on a July ferry trip to Geldeston Lock, near Beccles.



The Music Appreciation Group met recently to plan the programme for the new season. The topics for the first three months are a presentation of some of the music of the great American composer Aaron Copland. This is followed in September by viewing the video from a 2004 Promenade Concert featuring Leonard Slatkin conducting the BBC Symphony Orchestra in a multi composer arrangement of Mussorgsky's original piano version of 'Pictures at an Exhibition'. November sees our first foray into the great composer Beethoven as this is his anniversary year. We meet on the fourth Thursday of the month in the library from 10.30am to 12.00pm. We are a friendly group. The full programme and further information are on the website.

And finally:

The Unusual



Walking Group

Spotted on a walk. The tallest surviving UK post mill.

The Pleasurable

