



learn,  
laugh,  
live

# HWu3a

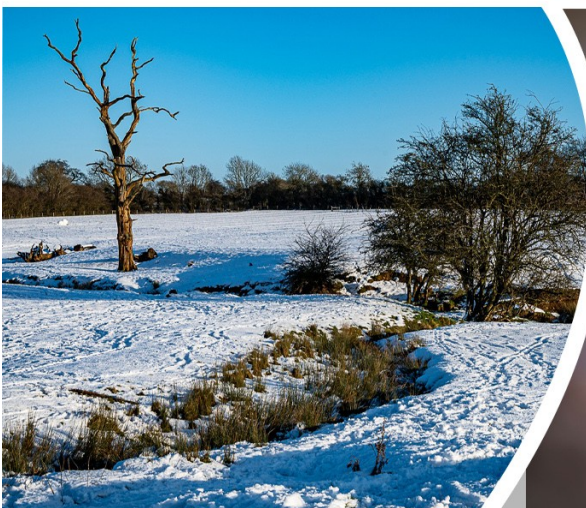
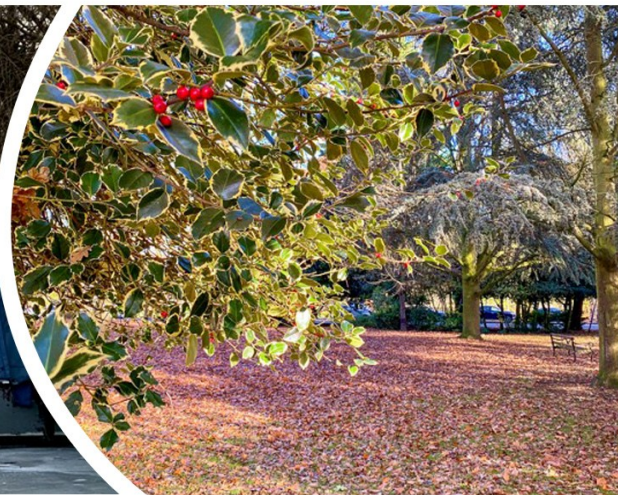
Magazine of the

hwu3a.org.uk Harborough Welland u3a

Issue No. 50

**Deep Midwinter**

February 2026



Welcome to the February edition (No. 50) of the HWu3a magazine. We hope this edition 'warms the cockles' but some of the images are quite chilling! Thanks again for all contributions received. We even have some seasonal jokes. All be praised!

*Dave Martin and Jack Horton, Publishing Team.*

Photo credits (Top R, Left to Rt) Alisoun Macdermid, John Hammond, Angela Deane (Guggenheim NYC), (Middle R, Left to Rt) Jeanette Judah, Angela Lloyd, Jutta Atkinson (Bottom R, Left to Rt) Jim Tyson, Angela Lloyd, John Hammond .

### Contents

**Page 2 Welcome, Committee report**

**Pages 3 - 6 In the deep Midwinter**

**Pages 7 - 9 Group Details**

**Pages 10 – 13 In the deep Midwinter**

**Page 14 Group Noticeboard, Ghost writer!**

**Page 15 Trip News**

**Page 16 Committee details, upcoming**

### News from the Committee - January 2026

**Recruitment of HWu3a Volunteers:** I'm pleased to report that there has been a positive response to our request for volunteers. We are now in the process of allocating roles to match the skills and expertise of these interested members. All will be revealed shortly, once everything is finalised, ready for our AGM in April. This experience has confirmed that our members have a lot to offer. Thank you to everyone who put their heads above the parapet!

**Finance News:** HWu3a has been able to claim £1,967 for 2025, thanks to our members who have signed a Gift Aid declaration. I would encourage you to consider this, if you are eligible, when renewing your membership before 31st May 2026.

Our Treasurer, Clare, and Assistant Treasurer, Linda, have been busy setting up a standardised system for the operation and reporting of Groups finances. Many groups are already incorporating the changes and this should help to reduce the heavy workload of both Trustees at the end of the year.

**Date for your Diary: AGM** on Monday 13th April - HWu3a needs your votes! Look out for further details over the next few weeks.

#### **Other News:**

- A further screening of The Millennium Tapestry film has been shown at the Community Church in Bath Street to yet another enthusiastic audience.

- HWu3a continues to be involved with Creative Harborough and a big event is planned throughout September.

- Tickets are now on sale for the Jordan Jammers concert on Saturday 28th February at the Desborough Library and Community Hub. Check out the details in the January magazine or buy your tickets at future monthly meetings.

- Membership currently stands at 1293. In 2025 our new members totalled 222, an increase of 21 from the previous year.

*Louise Elsome, Chair, Harborough Welland u3a chair@hwu3a.org.uk*

*By the members, for the members*

### In the Deep Midwinter.... Mike Goldsmith

I've always had a dislike of two months of the year – namely January and February. The days, though getting longer, are short and often dark, rather cold, and the weather here usually presents what I've come to call East Midlands grey – cloud, often accompanied by rain and occasionally by snow. Fewer people are out and about, one has always to put on lots of clothes to protect against the inclement weather (especially if one lives in the North West, as we did for forty years).

But many years ago we lived in Canada for a couple of years and midwinter there presented a very different picture. The temperature might have been well below zero on most days, snow would be piled high by the roadside, but the sun would be shining and the sky clear and beautiful. What was there not to like? One could take brisk walks in the sun, go for a drive and see some lovely snow covered countryside with lots of good views, whilst carrying on life as usual and enjoying good Canadian hospitality most weekends. One could go ice skating or cross country skiing, whilst the local council made small frozen lakes in various places on which small children could learn to skate – indeed it was on one of those that I myself took some first steps in skates, being encouraged by the 4 and 5 year olds that 'it's easy.' It was for them is all I will say... And the ice on Lake Ontario would be so thick that for some of the time people could drive their cars on it.

Where we were, on road parking was banned from the first week of December until well into late March so that the roads could be kept clear of snow. Unlike here, where even the thought of possible snow seems to keep most people off the roads, Canadians are well used to the white stuff, with the roads rapidly cleared on most main roads and in towns, with local roads usually quickly cleared by someone with a tractor! Everyone would have snow tires on their cars and could generally drive safely, though the occasional 180 degree or even 360 degree skid on an icy road was not unusual.



Of course our first experience of Canadian snow was quite something. I was due to join a colleague on a train trip to Toronto, but received a phone call from him telling me that a taxi he had ordered to take us to the local station had not arrived and that the over-

night snowfall probably meant we should abandon the trip.



< *Snow clearing in Ontario - a regular event!*

On going outside my wife sank almost up to her thighs in the stuff and I shovelled over two feet deep of it out of our driveway so we could get our car on the road... the first year we were there, I shovelled something like 12 feet of snow away, which no doubt helped keep me keep fit, but was one reason

why we eventually came back at the end of a second year in Ontario.

So maybe how one views deep midwinter depends on where you live and how much one's usual routines are upset by the weather, or maybe whether one had an optimistic view of the coming months or, if like me, could not wait until the first warm signs of Spring emerge, with the bulbs in flower and the first leaves appearing on trees. My favourite season is probably the Autumn, or the Fall as it would be called in Canada. There, the tree colours have to be seen to be believed, though the colours here last Autumn would have run them a close second. *Mike Goldsmith*

### **Seasons – a view from the Allotment.**

Read more about what happens on the allotments at Stevens Street in the online version. D.M



A lovely seasonal watercolour from Jutta Atkinson. Tip for other budding artists, when painting snow flakes, use a toothbrush.

**Jokes:** What do you call a snowman with a six pack?

*An abdominal snowman.*

Why was the snowman rummaging in a bag of carrots?

*He was picking his nose.*



Five ages of man in the "Deep Midwinter"  
With apologies to William Shakespeare

**The Infant:** As a child, the arrival of snow and ice was a delight, sledging or just sliding on ice with the added attraction of snowball fights and snowman building.

**Whining Schoolboy:** I have no remembrance of any schools being closed, the additional downside was playing Rugby on frozen pitches; fortunately at that age, if you fell over you bounced back up.

**Love sick lover:** Being a motorcyclist in the winter of 1963 which was an interesting time to be on ice and snow-covered roads with the severe lack of interest from anyone wanting to ride on the pillion seat.

**With eyes severe and beard of formal cut:** As a parent this gave me the opportunity to build snowmen and go sledging again, justified by the need to make certain that it was safe for the family. This was one of the vary rare times that I was able to impress my children: On a morning school run I took them into a deserted snow-covered Tesco car park and demonstrated Handbrake Turns in an Austin Princess.

**Frail Pantaloon:** The fourth age is as bad as the third, sadly I no longer ride a Motorcycle nor would I bounce back up if I took a fall. *Michael Milsom*

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**My winter reflection from the point of view of a runner**

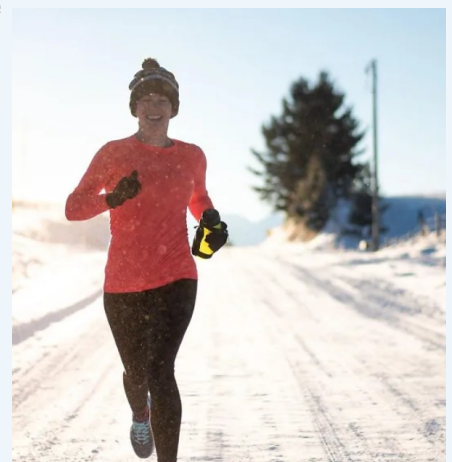
Winter seems such a long season as a runner. From October, evening runs are measured by how soon I have to add bright /reflective clothing and running lights to my outfit. I use light up ankle bands and a chest light and wear a hi-viz t-shirt. Layers are key to keeping warm, but need to be easily removable whilst running.

Once we're into the very cold conditions, more layers, a hat, gloves, a neck wrap and a jacket - it takes longer and longer to get ready to leave the house! Add in rain and then it's a case of "How do I get my trainers dry for tomorrow?"

I have lots of different seasonal leggings - poppies for November, Christmas themed ones for December and heart ones for February.

At last we get to March - lighter evenings are on the way, each week the lights are used a little less until finally the last week of March, clocks go forward, sunset is suddenly after 7pm and the lights can go back in the drawer for 6 months. Can't wait!

*Ali Brown, keen runner, (I prefer the summer!)*



No matter how you feel about running in the snow, use these six tips to make the most of your next snowy run.

This is a very interesting poem. A collaboration between Jack Horton and Co-Pilot, (AI)

I find it disturbingly good but I also have a sense of foreboding. What will happen

### Deep Midwinter

Deep midwinter settles in with a quiet, ancient breath,  
Frost etching silver runes on every windowpane.  
Ice clings to branches like fragile glass armour,  
And snow drifts gather in soft, unhurried mounds  
As high winds roam the fields like restless spirits.

Yet even in this stern and frozen hour,  
There is beauty threaded through the cold.  
Leaves—those that linger—curl like copper relics,  
And the trees stand patient, sculpted silhouettes  
Against a sky washed pale with winter light.

I feel the weight of the season in my thoughts -  
A stillness that is both comforting and heavy.  
There's a hush that invites reflection,  
But also, a longing for warmth to return,  
For colour to spill back into the world.

And so, I wait for spring,  
For the thaw that loosens winter's grip,  
For the first green shoots to dare the open air,  
For birdsong to stitch the mornings back together.  
Relief will come with the turning of the earth,  
Soft as a promise, bright as a beginning.

*Jack Horton and AI*

Image also created  
by Jack using AI.

# Harborough Welland u3a - Group Activities

## MONDAY

<b>ART HISTORY</b>	Angela Deane	01858 431111	Congregation Ch	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday	10.00 am
<b>BOOK TALK</b>	Andrew & Nita West	00001858 461517	Lounge Room, Meth Church	1 <sup>st</sup> Monday	2 pm
<b>BACKGAMMON</b>	Peter Saunders	07341 528450		1st and 3rd Monday	11 am 1pm
<b>CRAFTING FOR CHARITIES</b>	Helen Salisbury	07837 410575	Louisa's Place	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday	2.30 pm
<b>CRAFTING FOR CHARITIES 2</b>	Judith Sampson	07724 807482	Louisa's Place	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday	2-4 pm
<b>FRENCH REFRESHERS</b>	Rosemary Holden	001858 682623	Please call	Weekly	11.00 am
<b>FRENCH IMPROVERS</b>	Julie Jarosz	01536 712119	Please call	Weekly	pm
<b>HANDBELLS OPEN BOOK</b>	Helen Green Judy Rowley <a href="mailto:open.books@hwu3a.org.uk">open.books@hwu3a.org.uk</a>	07840 543379	Various Baptist Church, Coventry Rd.	Weekly 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday	2-3 pm 2 - 3.30pm
<b>PETANQUE</b>	Kevin Millard	01858 468015	Welland Park, nr Café.	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Mon	10 am to 1 pm
<b>QUILTY PLEASURES</b>	Diane Miles	01858 468357	Gt Bowden Village Hall	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Mon	2-4 pm
<b>SEW 'N' SEW</b>	Helen Salisbury	07837 410575	Louisa's Place	1st Monday	2-3.30 pm
<b>SONGS OF LEONARD COHEN</b>	Phil Aldridge <a href="mailto:ptaldridge@aol.com">ptaldridge@aol.com</a>		Community Church	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday	2 pm
<b>TABLE TENNIS 1</b>	Keith Keeble	07795 434076	Please call	Weekly	Morning
<b>UKULELES BEGINNERS</b>	David Evans	01858 463045	Community Church	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Mon	
<b>UKULELES</b>	David Evans	01858 463045	Community Church	Alternate Mondays	2-4 pm
<b>WALKING FOOTBALL</b>	Peter Prickett	07751 362857	Leisure Centre	Mondays	Afternoon
<b>WINE EXPLORERS</b>	Louise Elsome	07740 572956	Please call	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday	7.30 pm

## TUESDAY

<b>ARCHITECTURE</b>	Colin Cohen	07973 348817	Methodist Ch	4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	Afternoon
<b>ART APPRECIATION</b>	Hilary Bufton <a href="mailto:art.appreciation@hwu3a.org.uk">art.appreciation@hwu3a.org.uk</a>		Congregational Ch Ashley Room	4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	2.30 - 4.30pm
<b>GERMAN CONVERSATION</b>	Liam Lomasley	07772 325594	Louisa's Place	Every Tuesday	2-3.30 pm
<b>BOOKWORMS</b>	Louise Elsome	07740 572956	Baptist Church	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday	2.30 pm
<b>BRIDGE - SOCIAL</b>	Don Collins	01858 462409	Bowls Club, Little Bowden	Weekly	2 pm
<b>COUNTRY DANCING</b>	Sharon Webb	07886 855931	Congregation Ch	4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	2-4 pm
<b>FRENCH - LES BAVARDS</b>	Sheridan New	07795 872496	Enigma Cafe	Weekly	10.30 am
<b>Jamming Workshop</b>	Bob Morris	07939 988595	Various	Fortnightly	10.30 to 12.30
<b>LOCAL HISTORY</b>	Linda Swallow	07901 828855	Congregational Church	1st Tuesday	2-4 pm
<b>LISTENING TO JAZZ</b>	Mike Goldsmith	01536 770122	Please call	Last Tuesday	2.15-4.15 pm
<b>MUSIC, EXPLORING</b>	Kate Helm	07817 735784	Community Church	1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday	10 am
<b>PHOTOGRAPHY - TUESDAY</b>	Angela Lloyd <a href="mailto:photography.Tuesday@hwu3a.org.uk">photography.Tuesday@hwu3a.org.uk</a>		Community Church	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday	2.30 pm
<b>CHOIR - LADIES CHOIR</b>	Liz Brett	07907 631529	Cong Church	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	10.30 am
<b>THE READERS</b>	Susan Trevorrow	07999 082657	Various	1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday	2.30-4.30
<b>Tuesday Chat &amp; Craft</b>	Yvonne Starkey <a href="mailto:tarskey2015@gmail.com">tarskey2015@gmail.com</a>		Louisa's Café	Every Other Tuesday	10-11.30 am
<b>WALKING HALF DAY 2</b>	Diana Baxter	01162 792947	Outside	1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday	Various

## WEDNESDAY

<b>BADMINTON</b>	Carole Winfield	01858 432540	Meadowdale School	Weekly	5.45-7 pm
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<b>BELLEPLATES</b>	Pru Normand <a href="mailto:belleplates@hwu3a.org.uk">belleplates@hwu3a.org.uk</a>	Community Ch	Weekly	2-4 pm
<b>BIRDING WEDNESDAY</b>	Pam Duffin Linda Lawton <a href="mailto:birding.wednesday@hwu3a.org.uk">birding.wednesday@hwu3a.org.uk</a>		2 <sup>nd</sup> Wed	am
<b>CANASTA</b>	David Parsons 07796 816650	Little Bowden Bowls Club	Wednesday	2-4 pm
<b>NEW AGE KURLING</b>	Ian Webb <a href="mailto:beacon@hwu3a.org.uk">beacon@hwu3a.org.uk</a>	Congregation Ch	1 <sup>st</sup> Wed	2 pm
<b>NEW AGE KURLING 2</b>	Pat Middleton 07703 399432 Julia Granger 07909 330715	Congregation Ch	3 <sup>RD</sup> WED	2-3 PM
<b>MOVIE GROUP</b>	Jack Horton <a href="mailto:jkhorton@btinternet.com">jkhorton@btinternet.com</a>	Community Ch	1 <sup>st</sup> Wed	10 am
<b>On The Edge - Biographies</b>	James Hobson <a href="mailto:ontheedge@hwu3a.org.uk">ontheedge@hwu3a.org.uk</a>	The Activity Room, Methodist Church	4 <sup>th</sup> Wed	2-4 pm
<b>QUILTING</b>	Heather Watts 01858 434272	Community Ch	3rd Wed	10 am
<b>RAILWAY EXPLORATION</b>	Dudley Brown 07775 900243	Bowls Club, Little Bowden	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed	10 am
<b>SCRABBLE FOR FUN</b>	Toni Parsons 01858 431944	Community Ch	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Wed	10 am – 12 pm
<b>TABLE TENNIS 3</b>	Jenny Acaster 07530999850	MH Leisure Centre	Weekly	9 am
<b>TRANSPORT GROUP</b>	Michael Milsom 01858 419874	Bowls Club, Little Bowden	1 <sup>st</sup> Wed	10 am
<b>WALKING HALF DAY 1</b>	Bruce White 07919 935496 <a href="mailto:walking1.wednesday@hwu3a.org.uk">walking1.wednesday@hwu3a.org.uk</a>	Outside	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wed	Morning
<b>WALKING WED STROLLERS</b>	Linda Reed 07986 460319 Les Dodd 01858 462244	Various	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wed	10.15 am
<b>WEDNESDAY BOOK CLUB</b>	Jacqui Crowe <a href="mailto:wednesday.book@hwu3a.org.uk">wednesday.book@hwu3a.org.uk</a>	Members homes on a rota basis	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wed	1.30-3pm
<b>Wednesday Chat &amp; Craft</b>	Adriana White <a href="mailto:newgroups@hwu3a.org.uk">newgroups@hwu3a.org.uk</a>	Louisa's Café	Every other Wednesday	10-11.30am
<b>THURSDAY</b>				
<b>BIRDING THURSDAY</b>	Bruce White 07919 935496 <a href="mailto:birding.thursday@hwu3a.org.uk">birding.thursday@hwu3a.org.uk</a>	Outside	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday	Morning
<b>Cribbage</b>	Colin Smith and Anne Wilson <a href="mailto:cribbage@hwu3a.org.uk">cribbage@hwu3a.org.uk</a>	Little Bowden Bowls Club	Every Thursday	10am – 12noon
<b>DRAWING &amp; PAINTING</b>	Elaine Scarlett 01858 432 029	Oxendon Village Hall	1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday	pm
<b>FAMILY HISTORY</b>	Rob Green <a href="mailto:familyhistory@hwu3a.org.uk">familyhistory@hwu3a.org.uk</a>	Community Ch	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday	10 am – 12 pm
<b>FRENCH CONVERSATION GARDEN GROUP</b>	Hilary Pollak 07854 120605	Please call	Weekly	2.30 pm
<b>HISTORY, ASPECTS OF</b>	Stella Freeman 01536 760124 Ernie Parsons 01536 760141	Meth Church (winter) Desborough FC	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thurs 4 <sup>th</sup> Thurs	2 pm Pm
<b>INTERMEDIATE GERMAN MAH JONG</b>	Frances Parsons 07910 029273	E-mail for venue	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup>	10-11.30 am
<b>PLAY READING 1</b>	Pamela Costall 07803 204464 Carole Winfield 07966 442583	Baptist Church	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Thurs	9.45 am
<b>PLAY READING 2</b>	Alan Gurr 07967 566970 Alan Gurr 07967 566970	Methodist Ch Community Ch	2nd Thursday 2nd Thursday	10 - 12 2-4
<b>SPANISH BEGINNERS</b>	Don Collins 01858 462409	Community Ch	Weekly	2 pm
<b>SPANISH IMPROVERS</b>	Don Collins 01858 462409	Community Ch	Weekly	10 am
<b>TABLE TENNIS 2</b>	Sheridan New <a href="mailto:sheridan.new1@gmail.com">sheridan.new1@gmail.com</a>	MH Leisure Centre	Weekly	Midday
<b>TENNIS</b>	Neil & Mags 01858 431 665	Gt Bowden Tennis Courts	Weekly	10 am
<b>Thursday Ramblers</b>	Helen Salisbury <a href="mailto:walking1.allday@hwu3a.org.uk">walking1.allday@hwu3a.org.uk</a>	Outside, various	Last Thursday	10 am

<b>Urban Thursday Walks</b>	Gina and Graham Handsley <a href="mailto:urban.walks@hwu3a.org.uk">urban.walks@hwu3a.org.uk</a>		MH	1st Thursday	11 am
<b>WALKING HALF DAY 4</b>	Alan and Linda Reed <a href="mailto:walk-ing4.thursday@hwu3a.org.uk">walk-ing4.thursday@hwu3a.org.uk</a>		Outside, various	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday	
<b>WILDLIFE</b>	Diana Baxter	0116 279 2947	Outside, various	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday	
<b>WINE TASTING</b>	Jonathan/Naomi Shaw	01858 682133	Please call	3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday	Various
<b>FRIDAY</b>					
<b>CREATIVE WRITING</b>	Ann Eato/Nita West	01858 461517	MH Library	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday	2.15 pm
<b>CYCLING</b>	Kevin Millard	01858 468015	Outside	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Fri-days	10.30 am
<b>HEALTH &amp; WELLBEING</b>	Rob & Kathy Davison	07983 948392 07881 816909	Methodist Church	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday	10.30am
<b>PHOTOGRAPHY FRIDAY</b>	Phil Aldridge	07734903737	Welland Place	3 <sup>RD</sup> FRIDAY	pm
<b>PAPERCRAFT &amp; MORE</b>	Jan Collins	01858 462409	Please call	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday	am
<b>PAPERCRAFT – BEGINNERS</b>	Jan Collins	01858 462409	Please call	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Fri-days	
<b>DISCOVERING POETRY</b>	Jill Hart	01858 469663	Meth Church, Upper Room	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday	10 am
<b>SEQUENCE DANCE</b>	Christine Morris and Julie Holmes <a href="mailto:sequence.dance@hwu3a.org.uk">sequence.dance@hwu3a.org.uk</a>		Little Bowden Bowls Club	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Fri-days	2pm – 4pm
<b>SINGING FOR FUN</b>	George Cashell	01858 467616	Methodist Church	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Fridays	Pm
<b>SOCIETY TODAY</b>	Martin Gossage <a href="mailto:society.today@hwu3a.org.uk">society.today@hwu3a.org.uk</a>		Methodist Church, Youth Wing	3 <sup>RD</sup> FRIDAY	2-4 PM
<b>VEGETARIAN &amp; VEGAN</b>	Chris Hobson	01858 289784	Various	3 <sup>RD</sup> FRIDAY	12-2pm
<b>WALKING, FRI STROLLERS</b>	Carol Harvey Michael Parsons	07855 738706 07940185429	Outside	2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday	10.15 am
<b>SUNDAY</b>					
<b>SINGLES SUNDAY LUNCH</b>	Vivienne Murphy	01536 771410	Various	1 <sup>st</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Sundays	Various
<b>OTHER</b>					
<b>DO IT AGAIN GROUP</b>	<a href="mailto:doitagaingroup@hwu3a.org.uk">doitagaingroup@hwu3a.org.uk</a>		Various	Various	Various
<b>DRONES &amp; PHOTOGRAPHY</b>	Terry Eato	07943 732841	Outside	Various	Various
<b>Holiday Group</b>	Maryan Richardson <a href="mailto:trips1@hwu3a.org.uk">trips1@hwu3a.org.uk</a>		Advertised to group	Normally 5 days	various
<b>NEW EXPERIENCES</b>	Kevin Millard	01858 468015	Various	Various	Various
<b>TRIPS</b>	Maryan Richardson <a href="mailto:trips1@hwu3a.org.uk">trips1@hwu3a.org.uk</a>		See Events List	As advertised for each trip	
<b>WALKING – EVENING</b>	David Martin	01858 440530	Outside, summer	Various	Various

**Joke:** What do you get when you cross a vampire and a snowman?  
Frostbite.



## In the Deep Midwinter

### Canal views

On a canal walk yesterday we watched this little coot walking on the ice.

We passed a barge with smoke coming out of its chimney and wondered if it was possible to feel cozy inside it in the freezing weather.

We were pleased to return to a warm house....

*Eileen Robinson*



This view from Peter Hartley. *Now that is chilly!*

Snow's six-pointed symmetry  
Sparkles, sun's solstice  
Sheltering Spring's shy slow shoots.

*Sarah Scott*

In deep midwinter's frozen keep,  
Where silent fields lie fast asleep,  
The frost draws lace on every door,  
And ice glints cold along the floor.

The snow drifts down in gentle white,  
Soft feathers in the fading light,  
While winds howl wild across the land,  
A restless, unseen marching band.

Yet beauty lives in winter's reign—  
In copper leaves that still remain,  
In trees that stand through biting air,  
Tall silhouettes, serene and bare.

This season stirs a quiet mood,  
A mix of peace and solitude.  
I feel its weight, both calm and slow,  
A hush beneath the world of snow.

But still I dream of warmer days,  
Of sunlight breaking through the haze,  
Of springtime's green and gentle rise  
That lifts the grey from weary skies.



Copilot and J.H in rhyming mood!



### **Landscape with Snow 1888 by Vincent van Gogh, oil on canvas**

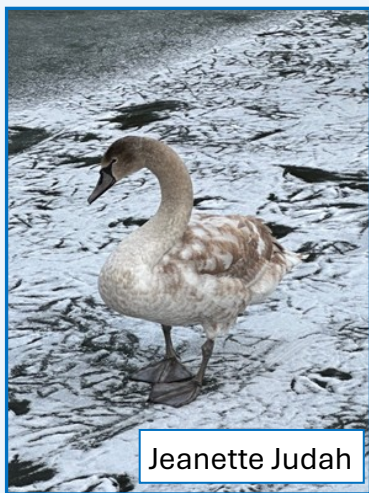
This is one of my favourite paintings by Van Gogh and is thought to be one of the first he made in Arles, southern France.

Upon arriving in Arles by train, Van Gogh found the ground covered in snow due to unusually cold temperatures and set about making a number of paintings. This one is of the La Crau plain with Montmajour in the background. The horizon sits high on the canvas with attention focused on the foreground and land leading up to the house.

The eye is drawn in by the road that starts in the left-hand corner and leads towards the trees, hills and snow-covered mountains. The horizontal brush strokes represent the plain that fills most of the painting and white and violet have been used for the patches of snow. The brown, green and blue strokes suggest puddles and slush. Tufts of grass are painted in yellow along the side of the road. A man in a brown jacket and black hat is walking with his brown dog.

I can imagine myself walking across the snowy ground, the air cold and fresh, the trees silhouetted against the blue sky and the thought of a warming cup of tea in the house at the top of the road.

Van Gogh was an avid collector of Japanese woodcut prints and may have been inspired by the prints of snowy scenes. The painting can be seen in the Guggenheim, New York or online <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/1486> **Angela Deane**



Jeanette Judah



John Hammond



Alisoun Macdermid

**All photos from members of Photography Tuesday Group.**

## **In the Deep Midwinter: Confessions of a February Fanatic. Steven Kim**

I need to make a confession: I love winter. Deep, dark, dreary midwinter. While my friends are planning escape routes to warmer climates and muttering about Seasonal Affective Disorder, I'm standing here in Market Harborough, embracing February like a long-lost friend who smells slightly of damp wool.

I know this makes me peculiar. My family staged what I can only describe as a concerned intervention. But I can't help it, give me frost and drizzle over sunshine any day.

### **Why Winter Makes Sense to Me**

Winter makes me think about life and death in ways that August never could. When I'm scraping ice off my windscreen at dawn, every warm moment suddenly feels precious. Every cup of tea becomes a minor miracle. Every successful navigation of the frozen pavement outside Waitrose without falling feels like I've cheated death itself.

Percy Shelley grasped this when he wrote, "If winter comes, can spring be far behind?" Or as I prefer: "No gain without pain", less poetic, but more honest. Would I truly appreciate spring daffodils if I hadn't first earned them through weeks of vitamin D deficiency and conversations consisting entirely of "Blimey, it's cold"?

### **The Hidden Pleasures**

I've learned to find genuine joy in winter's peculiarities. When darkness falls at 4:30 PM, I no longer fight it. I put on my pyjamas with shameless abandon and declare the day officially over. Try doing that in June without people asking if you're "quite all right."

Winter has made me extraordinarily easy to please. In July, a cup of tea is just a beverage. In February, with frozen fingers wrapped around a warm mug, it's a religious experience. That first blast of central heating when I come indoors? Better than winning the lottery. Finding my gloves in the correct pocket? Euphoric for hours.

### **Why We Need Seasons**

Could I imagine a year without seasons? Good God, no. I have friends who retired to places where it's perpetually seventy-five degrees and sunny. They tell me they miss "proper weather." What they really miss is having something to complain about.

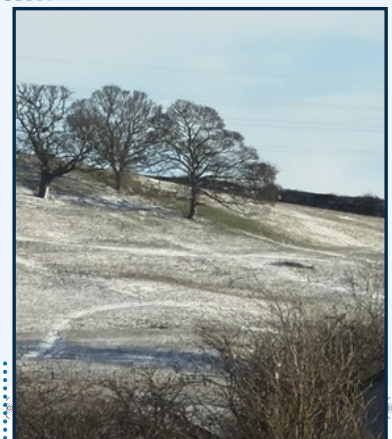
We British need seasons like we need tea. They give structure to our lives and our grievances. Without winter, how would I justify my scarf collection? What would I discuss in the Post Office queue? Remove seasons, and we're just people standing around with nothing to blame for our bad moods. *Read more in the online version ...*



John Dyson



Angela Lloyd



**All photos from members of Photography Tuesday Group.**

## Groups Noticeboard

The new groups recently started, are up and running and we hope that members are enjoying them. They are **Local History, On The Edge, Vegetarian & Vegan Cookery.**

The **Society Today** group is shortly to be resumed under 'new management'. More news on this at the February Get-together and the March magazine.

If you enjoy exploring the surrounding countryside then maybe the **Thursday Ramblers** group is for you? From March - October, circular walks are usually between 8 - 10 miles depending on the terrain and number of stiles. The aim is to start within a 30 - 40 minute travelling distance from Market Harborough and encourage members to share lifts. Take a packed lunch and there is a refreshment stop at a village pub (or occasionally a café). During the winter period the walks are around 6 miles starting from a pub, where lunch is arranged.

If you are interested in joining this group then contact Helen Salisbury, Group Coordinator, on email: [walking1.allday@hwu3a.org.uk](mailto:walking1.allday@hwu3a.org.uk) or call 07837 410 575

**The 60s & 70s Music Group** is unfortunately no more! We have to thank Rose & Tony Gale who ran the group for over 2 years. It was a popular group and if anyone wants to consider starting a similar group where members can listen to, talk about, sing along to music that we miss from 'x' years ago, then contact me [groups@hwu3a.org.uk](mailto:groups@hwu3a.org.uk).

The **Backgammon** group can accommodate a few more participants. Prior knowledge of the game is not necessary as we will gladly teach you. Many of the group were 'newbies' 12 months ago and are now quite accomplished players. Once learnt it can become quite compulsive. Contact me (PS) at [backgammon@hwu3a.org.uk](mailto:backgammon@hwu3a.org.uk)

Dick Van Aken of the **Movie Group** is offering to hold a session for anyone who would like to improve their use of the mobile phone or camera in order to take better pictures and videos. There is nothing technical to get to grips with, purely useful hints and tips. Depending on the number interested, will help us work out the best way to hold a session. Contact me [groups@hwu3a.org.uk](mailto:groups@hwu3a.org.uk) Peter Saunders – Groups Facilitator



### "Stuck for Words?" *Sheila Caberwal.*

Have you had a fantastic experience, an interesting event or a startling story which you would like to share? I am offering a **ghost writing** service. I love writing. I love talking with people. We can meet, I will listen and then I will write it up for you. I will endeavour to keep your phrases and expressions. The written piece will be returned to you so you can then send it on for inclusion in the U3A magazine, if you wish.

Ghost writing will allow you to contribute to the U3A.

Contact Sheila Caberwal [sheilacaberwal@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sheilacaberwal@yahoo.co.uk) Tel. 07979 387 497



## HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

13 APRIL 2026



We will have a guided tour of the Lords and Commons Chambers and also Westminster Hall which takes approx. 1½ hours. We will also have a Question & Answer session with Neil O'Brien, M.P. for Harborough, and if you wish, a ticket for the public gallery.

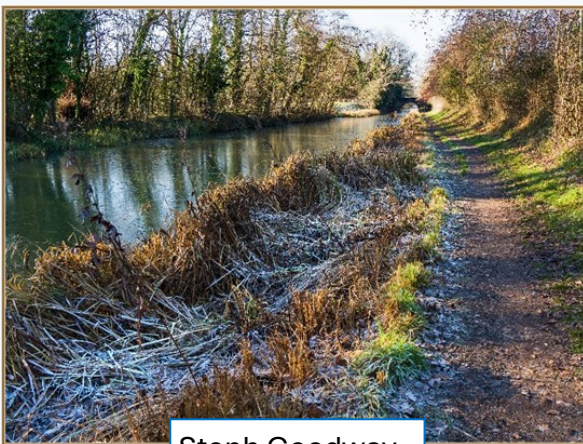
There is a café off Westminster Hall for snacks.

Cost of the trip £20

Coach will leave Market Hall at 7.45am

To book: contact Maryan Richardson - email [trips1@hwu3a.org.uk](mailto:trips1@hwu3a.org.uk)

All photos from members of Photography Tuesday Group.



Steph Goodway



Jim Tyson



Phil Aldridge



Jack Horton

## Coming up

### UPCOMING EVENTS 2026

Feb 9th Stella Renwick, Charity Manager of Home-Start South Leicestershire  
Feb 23rd Get Together  
March 9th 'My Amazing Journey to Antarctica' by Dave Pinion  
March 23rd Get Together

**Dave Pinion, is a retired international subsea cable engineer.**

One of his passions is the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 2023 he made the trip of a lifetime to Antarctica. His expedition ship sailed from New Zealand to the Ross Sea where he visited the expedition huts of Scott and Shackleton, traversed halfway round the Antarctic continent to the Antarctic Peninsula, and finally via Deception Island to Argentina.

**Theme for March edition : ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE** We are very keen to hear your views on this subject. Can you see the benefits or possible pitfalls. We have featured some of the possibilities that AI can deliver. Nevertheless, Dave and Jack have conflicting views. What are yours? Please send your contributions to [newsletter@hwu3a.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@hwu3a.org.uk), **not marketing** as this only goes to Jack Horton and he then has to forward them to me. *Dave M*

You can read many more articles and see more photos in the online edition. Go to [hwu3a.org.uk](http://hwu3a.org.uk) then click on 'What's on' and 'Newsletters'. We would welcome your comments and your contributions for this online version. *Jack Horton & David Martin.*

**Copy Deadline for March edition - Wednesday 18th of February.**

### HWu3a Executive Committee — Committee contact

**Louise Elsome, Chair**

chair@hwu3a.org.uk 07740 572956

**Jack Horton, Marketing, Vice Chair**

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**Pamela Costall, Secretary**

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**Linda Reed, Membership Secretary**

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groups@hwu3a.org.uk 07341 528450

**Robert Davison, Premises Coordinator**

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Ian Webb, Beacon Administrator [beacon@hwu3a.org.uk](mailto:beacon@hwu3a.org.uk)

Anne Wilson, STARS Coordinator [stars@hwu3a.org.uk](mailto:stars@hwu3a.org.uk)

Adriana White, New Groups Facilitator [newgroups@hwu3a.org.uk](mailto:newgroups@hwu3a.org.uk)

Harborough Welland Facebook Page; <https://www.facebook.com/groups/202921518684959/>

## Online Supplement

Welcome to the online supplement where we feature more contributions to our theme, **in deep midwinter**. We invite you to submit ideas and suggestions for themes for future editions. This section also contains group reports - but we welcome groups not included to consider providing reports and photographs going forward.

We thank you for your continued support - it is amazing the depth and range of talent we have within HWu3a. Jack Horton and Dave Martin Publishing Team.

### CONTENTS

P.17 Introduction

P.18 In deep midwinter

P.19-20 Seasons

P. 21-22 Seasonal Photographs

P. 23 - 24 In deep midwinter

P. 25 Bookworms

P. 26 Drone Group, Health & Welbeing

P. 27 Photography Tuesday , Spanish Improvers

P.28 -30 Walking Groups

P. 31 Community Page.



#### Before and After –

Spotted in Welland Park recently. Are they an installation or just a case of very severe pollarding?

We shall have to wait and see, watch this space to follow the changing seasons.

Dave M

Why did the snowflake break up with the blizzard? It needed some space — things were getting too stormy.



Continued from page13.

### The U3A Advantage

Here's what I've realized through our U3A: at our age, we've earned the right to appreciate winter's strange gifts. I've survived enough Februaries to know the absolute truth, this will pass. Spring will come, possibly disguised as "rain but marginally less cold rain," but it will come.

Meanwhile, while younger people are outside attempting "fresh air" in unsuitable clothing, I'm inside with you lot, warm and dry, learning something new or playing bridge. We're drinking tea, occasionally glancing at the windows with that peculiarly British mixture of smugness and horror, congratulating ourselves on excellent life choices. This is winter wisdom, and I've earned every bit of it.

### My February Truth

So, here's to the depths of winter that make me appreciate life's fragility. Here's to darkness that makes light precious, cold that makes warmth meaningful, and dreariness that makes beauty stunning when it finally arrives.

Shelley was right about hope. I'm right about pain preceding gain. And we're all right to gather here, inside, waiting out the storm together with tea and good company. Because while February is having its theatrical moment now, spring is definitely coming. It might be delayed due to leaves on the line or the wrong kind of snow, but it's coming. Until then, I'll be here in my scarf and thermal underwear, thinking about Shelley and mortality and the precious nature of every warm moment.

I'll put the kettle on. Again.

*Member of the Harborough Welland U3A, where we have a thoroughly good time indoors, with heating.*

Steven Kim

### Last days of winter

As if I held a magic wand

Watching the ice, crackle on the pond

Coat well zipped, gloves and scarf

Making my way along the path

Slowly little buds appear

Hearing birdsong, Spring is near

Anon





In the bleak midwinter  
Frosty wind made moan  
Earth stood hard as iron,  
Water like a stone;  
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,  
Snow on snow, etc

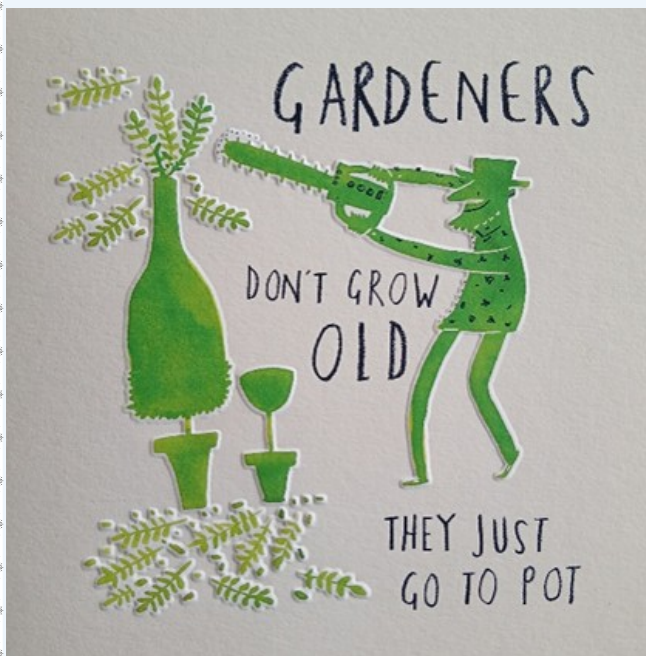
*You get the picture!*

The photos from the Steven Street allotments, are actually from January 2021 but apart from snow, winter is not enjoyable for *allotmentees* for many reasons. Apart from the white stuff, the soil is often wet, heavy to dig and far

too cold for seeds to germinate.

Much better to wait for Spring, my favourite season. Summers tend to be increasingly hot and dry and repeated watering is essential if crops are to survive. Autumn is good for fruit but generally sad as vegetable plants have now finished and need digging up and clearing. And of course the thought of oncoming bleak mid-winter.

What prompted me to write this article was my birthday, (January 11<sup>th</sup> if you are interested) and some of the cards I received.



## Seasons Continued

I am naturally delighted that my friends acknowledge my birthday and recognise my gardening hobby. However, I regularly look out of the window at the allotments on my birthday and can only look forward to the Spring time and getting out there, sowing and planting.



My allotment , January 2021



Spring blossom – a beautiful sight with a promise of fruit to come.

Maybe some cricket!

*Dave M*

# More Seasonal Photographs

Photographs by members of the Photographic Tuesday Group.



Phil Aldridge



John Dyson



Steph Goodway



Jim Tyson



Alisoun Macdermid

## Seasonal Photographs Continued

Photographs by members of the Photographic Tuesday Group.



Angela Lloyd



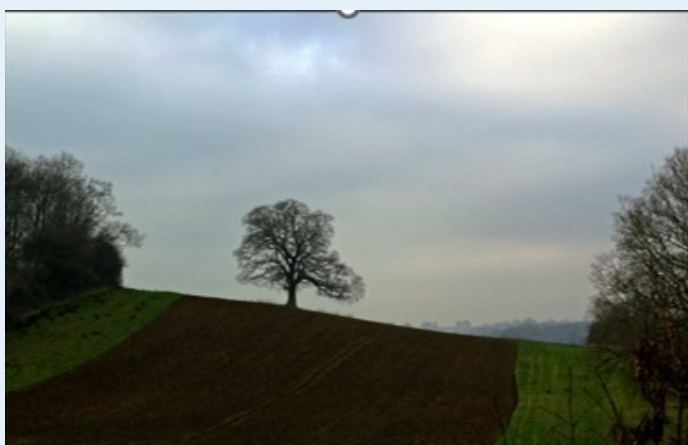
Jeannette Judah



Jack Horton



Angela Lloyd



John Hammond



Fiona Barnaby

### In the deep mid-winter

Winter usually gets short shrift from most people. Okay the daylight hours are short, it is often cold, wet and windy, but let's look at the positive aspects. You can put clothes on in the winter to keep warm, whereas in the summer there is a limit to what you can take off! People often complain about closing the curtains early and feeling shut in but I feel it is turning the house into a cocoon where we can feel cosy. It becomes a time to watch old films, read books, or invite friends in to counteract any feelings of loneliness.



Then of course cold, wet and windy weather can be pretty hideous, but like the Scandies say, there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes. As someone who loves hats and gloves plus the occasional scarf, or even a snood there is no excuse to be cold. Although wet & windy weather is my least favourite, it plays havoc with my mascara!



What is more wonderful than a crisp cold morning when the sky is blue and the sun shines.

Having a dog means going out whatever the weather, a short-coated dog is a bonus, but that does mean she is less keen on going out than we are. We're not sure what she likes least, a coat or the rain.

Then there is the herald of spring. I love the fact that when the leaves fall from the trees the new buds are already there, waiting for the days to get longer. We have snow drops popping out already, with all the other bulbs pushing up.

When you look at winter in the UK, and to be honest I'm talking about Market Harborough, you have November with all the wonderful colours of the trees; December with the excitement of Christmas; January, which I will agree can be pretty ghastly, that's

## In Deep Midwinter

### In the deep mid-winter continued:

where looking at the tree buds, or searching out early bulbs etc. helps; February when the bulbs are really coming through and you can go out and about searching out vistas of snowdrops and daffodils, and as the shortest month of the year, March will be upon us before we know it.

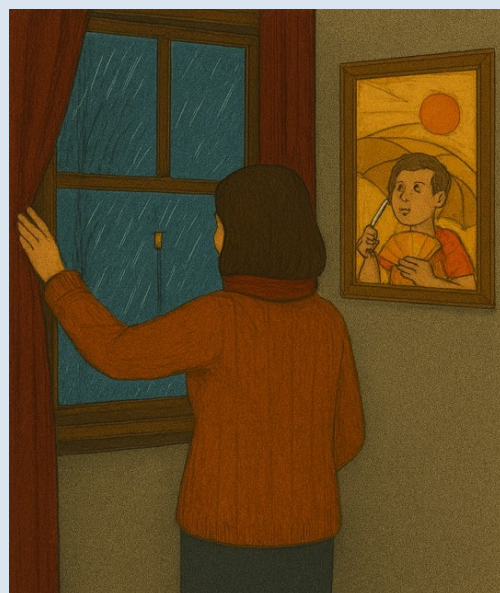


The other way to look at it is that as we get older and time starts to fly by, the winters seem shorter than ever.

So next time you look outside on a wet and windy day just remember it won't be long before we're complaining about the heat!

Thank you to Pamela for her reflections on the winter seasons. I have illustrated her contribution using Copilot images (AI). Jack

Pamela Costall



### Bookworms Report

To start the year off, the group read 'All the Broken Places' by John Boyne, a prolific Irish author whose novels are published in 60 languages, making him the most globally translated Irish writer of all time. He is probably best known for his 2006 novel 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' and it's from here that one of the characters, Gretel, is taken to relate her story in 'All the Broken Places'.

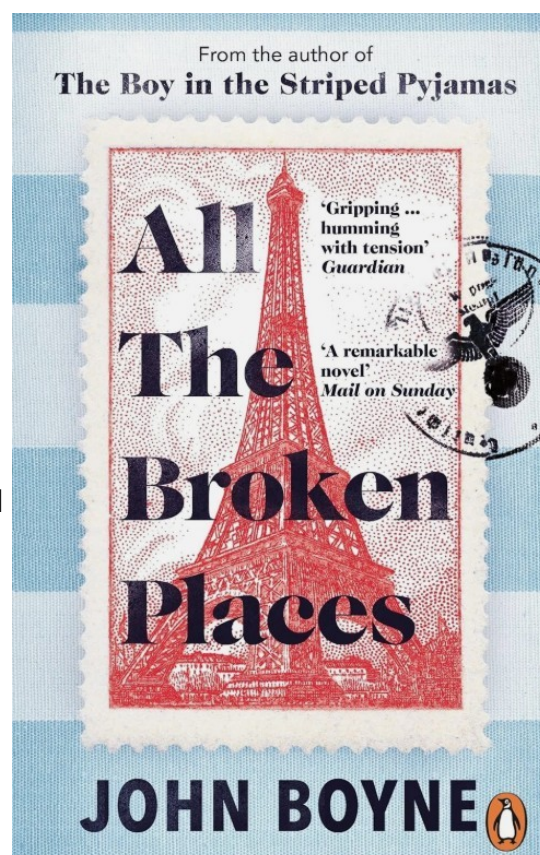
We first meet Gretel in her early 90s, living a quiet life in her Mayfair apartment. Early in the story, hints are subtly dropped that something has happened in her past - her year long absence from her nine-year-old son's life, her insistence that this apartment is where she and her husband, Edgar, must live. When a young family with their nine-year-old son, Henry, moves downstairs, painful memories from the past return. Gretel's earlier life is revisited as we hear about her escape from Germany with her mother after the Second World War, the dark post-war years in France and her brief time in Australia where she tries, unsuccessfully, to begin a new life. Even when she returns to London in 1953, she cannot escape the events which moulded her childhood and adolescence and filled her with such guilt and grief.

Guilt, the overriding theme, consumes Gretel - 'Guilt followed you down streets, interrupting the most mundane moments with remembrances of days and hours when you could have done something to prevent tragedy but chose to do nothing'. At other times she completely denies it - 'When I looked at my past, so much of it was built around evasion and deception, the impulse to protect myself over others'.

As problems escalate with the family downstairs, Gretel has the opportunity to save the young boy. However, all this comes at a cost to her true identity. Will she take the risk? Despite featuring the Holocaust and Nazi Germany, the book was enjoyed by group members as we empathised with Gretel's dilemma and felt her conflicting emotions. Perhaps there were one or two unlikely coincidences, but they felt justified as they highlighted the ways in which the different characters dealt with their past actions. John Boyne's engaging writing, well drawn characters and a clever twist or two at the end make this a page-turning read!

Louise Elsome

'Bookworms' Group Coordinator



## Group Reports

### Drone Group - Annual General Meeting.

Any HWu3a member who may be interested in knowing more about the group and its activities is invited to join this meeting to be held on Thursday 26th February at 10am at Clipston Village Hall. An outline agenda is shown below. Please Contact Terry Eato 07943 732841 if you would like to attend.



### AGENDA

Welcome and run through of today's agenda - (Andy Sturdy)

1. Group's achievements 2025 - (Jim Tyson/Terry Eato)
2. The History of Drones -(Jim Tyson)
3. Discuss basic video production tools DGI v apple v others - (Jack Horton/Andy)
4. Discuss key video and still shot composition for producing effective videos & adding sound to drone footage - (All members attending)
5. Drone group members best picture or video (2-3mins) from club members – send to Andy.
6. Projects for 2026 -(All members can input their ideas for the coming year)
7. AOB:

### Health and Wellbeing – January 2026 talk

In January the HWB group welcomed Mr. Bruce Wakeling from Silvertimelegal.

The firm specializes in wills, trusts and powers of attorney – things we often try to ignore and not think about. Despite the somewhat sombre topics, Bruce delivered a humorous and engaging talk. There were many questions from the audience. He was able to answer all these in his relaxed yet informative manner.

Many members stopped to ask Bruce further questions after the end of his talk.

Silvertimelegal can be contacted via their website at [www.silvertimelegal.co.uk](http://www.silvertimelegal.co.uk)

Robert Davison

## Group Reports

### Photography Tuesday Group

It has been a real pleasure to have been the group coordinator for this talented group of Photographers. However, I am pleased to announce that Angela Lloyd has agreed to take over this role as joint coordinator with John Hammond.

The items for the next meeting on Tuesday February 17th are as follows:

1. Set Subject: Animal, Vegetable and Mineral (2 images to be produced for each).
2. John Dyson, member, will be discussing an image by a well known photographer.
3. Members will discuss their homework image and identify all the editing stages involved.

Anyone interested in joining the group please contact:

Angela Lloyd email: [photography.tuesday@hwu3a.org.uk](mailto:photography.tuesday@hwu3a.org.uk)

Jack Horton

### Spanish Improvers Group

#### Nuestros mejores deseos para 2026 (Our best wishes for 2026)

As usual, the Spanish Improvers group celebrated Christmas in mid-January with a “bring and share” lunch and Secret Santa. A few people couldn’t attend because they were away, some practising their Spanish in Spain.

Over the past year we have welcomed several new members, including some from the Spanish beginners group. We continue to chat in Spanish about holidays, family events past and present, current affairs, books we have read, films we have seen, the successes of Harborough Town football team and anything else that catches our interest. We have reminisced about television programmes from our childhood and events such as the big freeze of 1962-1963. We try to avoid politics but don’t always succeed.

Several members of the group are confident enough to lead discussions, with Don there to correct us when we go completely wrong and to provide vocabulary when none of us can think of the words we want. Sometimes we have short grammar sessions, though there is usually a groan when anyone mentions the subjunctive. Recently we have looked at a few Spanish tutorials online, which lead to further discussion.

Outside the group many of us use other resources to improve our Spanish, including Duolingo, various other online learning tools, ChatGPT and visiting Spanish speaking countries. However, most of us agree that being part of this friendly and supportive group has given us confidence to try conversations in Spanish.

Diana Sharvill

### Spanish Improvers Group



### Wednesday Strollers Post Christmas, Pre 2026

Ten members gathered at Wilbarston for a stroll between Christmas and New Year. We explored around the village and ventured out towards the old Desborough Airfield. We returned to The Fox and spent some time with the Licensee talking about the problems of pub life in a location a bit "off the beaten track". Fingers crossed for its future.

The meeting on Jan 14th was a pleasant stroll from Walcote village along the commemorative memorial footpath to Misterton. Twelve assembled on a crisp frosty morning and we were lucky that the sun did shine on the righteous, even if not too warmly! We enjoyed this January outing catching up on news and renewing "auld acquaintances". Indeed, at the completion, most drove over to South Kilworth where we lunched in the comfort and warmth of the golf club. We knew on our trek we were getting nearer to Misterton as the cacophony from junction 20 on the M1 serenaded us with a roaring welcome back! An enjoyable start to the 2026 season.

*Les Dodd*

### Wednesday half day walking group



Members of the Wednesday half day walking group braved some very cold temperatures as they explored various byways around Foxton. Thanks to Bruce for keeping us out of the mud and on the straight and narrow. *Dave Martin*

### Thursday half day Walkers report Thursday 22nd Jan

We started the year off with a walk from the George at Brixworth. A much-depleted group of eight braved the wet weather on the journey to our meeting place. A curtailed route was planned due to the inclement weather. However, to our delight the rain stopped and we enjoyed a pleasant, if somewhat grey and overcast, walk around Brixworth Country Park. Our return route took us past the Old Workhouse, now housing a dental practice and a café. Wonder if the patients nip next door for a cake after their dental visit?

We enjoyed a pleasant lunch at the pub even if the food was somewhat slow to appear!  
*Linda Reed*

## Group Reports

### Friday Strollers

As the weather was so unkind to us in January we will attempt to do the stroll on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March. We meet in Ashley village, LE16 8HF at 10-30am. Park along by church wall, Hall Lane. We will stroll around the village, bearing in mind in some parts it could be very muddy. Lunch will be at The Wheel and Compass, Weston by Welland, LE16 8HZ.

The pub would like pre-orders please, names and choices to Carol by 10<sup>th</sup> March. Maximum 20 strollers please, we look forward to seeing you.

Just a reminder we are still looking for volunteers to lead in April, October and November please, if you feel you can help please contact us.

Best wishes Carol and Mike.

07855738706

[carol.harvey1@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:carol.harvey1@hotmail.co.uk)

Click on this link for more information: [u3a Publicity Update](#)

### Dates for the diary

#### 11-13 February - Interest Groups Online Fair

Interest Groups Online, our online community with over 100 interest groups, is hosting an online fair in February. This is a chance to try out a new group across 10 free taster sessions, open to both members and non-members.

You may be interested in the free introductory session on Canva - a powerful graphic design package that makes designing posters, presentations and brochures simple. Please help spread the word - [members can sign up for free on the u3a website](#).

#### 1-3 July - u3a Festival 26

After the success of the first Festival in 2024, we're holding it again this year at the University of York. This residential is open to all u3a members and will feature workshops, music groups, sports, performances and talks.

Booking opens in February - to receive this link to your email, please sign up to our [u3a Friends Newsletter](#) and tick that you would like to receive Festival Updates. If you are already subscribed to the newsletter, you will need to [update your preferences](#).

#### 1 October - International Day of Older Persons

The United Nations International Day of Older People is celebrated raise awareness of opportunities and challenges faced by older people. This year's UK theme is: Building Belonging: Celebrating the power of our social connections.

If you'd like to get involved, [Centre for Ageing Better](#) has ideas for activities and ways you can mark the day with your u3a and help challenge the narrative around ageing.

### Maintenance Volunteers

Dear Harborough Welland U3A ,

We are writing to you as we're currently recruiting for Maintenance Volunteers to support us with the Public Rights of Way network and thought that this is something that may be of interest to your members. PROW Maintenance Volunteers help our Inspectors on the practical side of things, perhaps cutting back vegetation, clearing over stiles/round gates, cleaning or re-installing waymark posts, surveying routes, and any other suitable task.

Volunteer events are organised and supervised with small groups to carry out work tasks, whilst surveying routes can be done independently by just going for a walk on a prescribed route with one or two others and providing feedback on the condition of the paths.

We have an advert that is currently on the County Council's volunteering page which takes people to the full details for the role on the Assemble volunteering platform. For the advert and full details people need to follow this link:

[LCC PROW Maintenance Volunteer](#)

Our next induction meeting is Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> February at 2.00 pm, taking place at County Hall, Glenfield.

We would be grateful if you could pass this message around to anyone in your group whom you think might be interested.

Many thanks

With kind regards

**Sarah Bowler**

Public Rights of Way Inspector

Leicestershire County Council