

### From the Chair

*I write this on another sunny but windy day!*

*My summer is quiet as I intended, as I am away in September. I love the longer days and better temperatures but shortly I will be doing my rounds of Yorkshire to visit family. It is a lot of driving but I love to catch up with everyone and even maybe a friend too – if it works out for us.*

*I had an unexpected visit from my best friend's daughter and her partner, on their way to Latitude. We laughed a lot and I caught up on their news. It made me consider festivals and camping and mud and distant toilets...and I decided that yes I was – and am – too old for any of it! The sense of freedom and a little yearning about days gone by, has ceased. A comfortable bed, hot shower and a clean loo are now minimum requirements!! How things change!!!*

*Our U3A is taking a break, but many groups are continuing as members are happy to still meet. The Asset List for u3a property held by Interest Groups and also what is held within New Green, has been updated. We have been seeking to promote ourselves in some village magazines and this will continue.*

*Some of you will have noticed at our July meeting, that Brenda brought in some examples of what the Quilting and Patchwork Group have produced. Beautiful work and wonderful results of members' efforts. Other Interest Groups will be showcasing their particular activities over the coming months. The Committee felt this may be a more useful way to promote the Interest Groups. But of course, a phone call to Group Leaders can always give you any information you need to join a group.*

*Enjoy the next bit of hot weather and I hope to see you in September.  
My best wishes to you all,*

*Liz Chair Blackbourne U3A*



A view in the gardens at East Ruston. See back page

My thanks to all those who have contributed to this newsletter especially the team who regularly supply the lecture reports. They would appreciate additional members to the team to spread the load. Please contact Mary Dunbavin or myself if you feel like giving this a try.

More input from Interest groups would be welcome as this is another way to inform members of the activities on offer.

Copy and pictures for the next issue should be sent to me by November 15  
[bryann@brysuward.plus.com](mailto:bryann@brysuward.plus.com)

Bryann Ward

### Monthly Lectures

10.00am at New Green Centre  
Refreshments served until 9.45

#### Monday 1 September

First female bomb disposal expert

Lucy Lewis

#### Monday 6 October

Sir Cloudsley Shovell

Cathy Shelbourne

#### Monday 3 November

A career journey through film, TV and theatrical costume design.

Part 2

Amanda Sutherland

#### Monday 1 December

The history of English pantomime

Jim Stebbings

Followed by seasonal refreshments

## Big Cats Around The Globe

For May's talk, attended by 93 members, Barbara Meyer, a professional wildlife photographer and conservationist gave a very informative talk on the subject of big cats from around the globe.

Barbara took us on a journey to explore 'what is a big cat', where they live, what kind of problems they are facing in their wild habitat and what measures are being taken to help them in their fight against extinction.

She began by explaining that there is no definitive scientific definition on what constitutes a big cat and different people have various ideas on what is classed as a big cat. Some cats that you may think are a big cat, such as Cheetahs, are not in fact classed as a big cat.

We were told about the many types of big cats and where they live. While many people think the bulk of the big cats are to be found in Africa, there are actually more different types in Asia. For example of the 8 types of Leopard only 1 is found in Africa, with the other 7 being found in Asia.

Many of the big cats are endangered and close to extinction, which is due to several factors, such as



poaching, loss of habitat, human conflict and disease. Some big cats are poached for their fur, or to be used in medical remedies, none of which actually work. The loss of habitat can be down to using the land for farming. One example is the amount of land now used to produce palm oil, especially in

Indonesia and Malaysia. Also human conflict can lead to the loss of land, as well as affecting some of the conservation programme. Big cats are also at risk from farmers who blame them for the loss of livestock, but to try to stop farmers from killing the cats, there are now compensation schemes in some parts of the world.

Barbara finished by telling us about various conservation projects that are being carried out to prevent the loss of some those species that are close to extinction. This includes breeding programmes that are taking places in various zoos, including one at Colchester zoo.

*Paul Taylor*

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## Peregrine Falcons in Suffolk



Our speaker for June, Peter Merchant, explained that his interest started in 1976 with a kestrel that had been injured. He started Raptor Rehabilitation, first in Lincolnshire and then in Ipswich, and has been licensed to handle raptors since 1983. When raptors are injured it is difficult for a vet or even a falconry expert to aid them to recovery and hopefully eventual release.

Peregrines usually nest on high cliffs but had recently been attracted to tall buildings with the associated danger to the public. It is illegal to disturb a peregrine's nest so if any work is being done near a nest site it has to stop until after the chicks have left the nest. Peter has the authority to stop such work. He outlined the details in setting up the nest box under the Orwell Bridge. Initially there was a problem in that once the chicks had fledged they could not return leading to a fatality rate of nearly 100%. However in 2016 a platform was installed to allow them to return safely and there have been few losses since.

Peregrines like to nest in clean locations and will sometimes consider a vacated crow's nest, as was the case on a crane at Felixstowe docks. After the end of the breeding season Peter cleans out all the nests to encourage the peregrines to return and not try to nest in a more inconvenient spot. It was discovered that, when peregrines are considering a possible nest site, action is taken to make it safe for the birds and also for the public. For example at BT Martelsham, because it was necessary for work to be done near the nest box, a partition was installed to prevent the peregrines seeing the work being carried out.

Peter also spoke about the nest box set up in the louvres at Stoke by Nayland church and also that peregrines had considered the Jumbo Tower in Colchester where there was a gap in the brickwork but they had found the entrance too narrow and changed their minds. A peregrine's range is about five miles and usually young peregrines look for locations similar to the one where they were hatched.

*Mary Dunbavin*

## Terry Wogan's Hair Weave and Other Stories

This was a talk given By Graham Keal where I feel the title was flattering to deceive. The July talk was the last of our academic year and it is appropriate that the talk was of a very light hearted nature.

This was the second time that we had heard from Graham and again I felt that he was making full use of the names of famous people that he had interviewed, most often as a member of a group of reporters, to produce entertainment.

He had obviously enjoyed meeting Eric Morecambe and was slightly shocked when several years after Eric died he met Ernie Wise and was told that Ernie felt that Eric's continued support of charities had contributed to his death.

He had met Terry Wogan in 1985 and had a very tenuous story to confirm that Terry had a hair weave. To be honest do we care about the hair of a wonderful entertainer?

Among the other famous names that Graham was able to confirm he had met were Wendy Richards, Pat Phoenix, Bob Monkhouse and David Frost.

Graham entertained the audience and I am sure confirmed, for many of us, that the famous people that we think were nice really were very nice characters.

*Laurie Marshall*

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## From Page to Stage and Back Again

You love to be on stage but maybe you've reached that point where learning lines is a hard grind. That was where I was a couple of years ago.

What about joining a Play Reading Group I thought? Just like the one at Blackbourne U3A?

So I did and it has been great fun. No lines to learn, no auditions and a new part to tackle each month. Not only have I encountered playwrights I had never even thought about but I have also met some very interesting and welcoming people.

It was not long before we agreed to put on a reading at Thurston Library at Christmas - and that seems to have become an annual event. We are now looking at other venues. Then I wrote a play! And the play reading group agreed to try it out. And they liked it! In fact their enthusiasm for what became 'The Ripple Effect' convinced me to try to get it on the stage.

It took a while but I assembled a cast and we are in rehearsal and will open on 25/27th September at The John Mills Theatre, Ipswich

Other group members have also written plays and we have presented one, 'Auld Lang Syne, M'Dear,' at Thurston Library when our own group reading convinced us that it would be appreciated by a wider audience.

Who knows what we will get up to next...

For more information about 'The Ripple Effect' please contact the writer at: [davidandalexpollard@gmail.com](mailto:davidandalexpollard@gmail.com).

*David Pollard*

The Play Reading Group meet once a month on the third Thursday in members' homes.

## Short Walks Group



Outside Langham church

The April walk started from Badwell Ash Village Hall, led by Stella.

We walked towards and through Langham, and were able to go in the church which still has no electricity. It is Grade 2 listed.

Through a field with sheep and lambs then through a stud farm with horses and foals.

We returned to Badwell Ash and visited the church with its beautiful Angel roof.

The sun shone and we all agreed it was a lovely walk.

*Tina Taylor*



## Art and Mixed Media Group

**Annual exhibition**

Pakenham Village Hall

Saturday 25 October from 10.00am  
to 4.00pm

Paintings will be for sale as will  
home made refreshments

New members are always  
welcome to our relaxed  
fortnightly meetings

Please contact  
Helen Mason on  
07778 649577

## “The Bookshop, The Draper, The Candlestick Maker: A History of the High Street” by Annie Gray

Available from the library

Reviewed by Stella Chamberlin



What makes a high street? It's certainly not just about the shopping; these thoroughfares are often the beating heart of our towns and cities and, by extension, of the people who use them. As spaces where local life and culture unfold, our high streets can be playgrounds of personal indulgence and community spirit, or sites of contentious debate and politicking.

This East Anglian historian takes us down the street and through the ages, from medieval marketplaces to the purpose-built concrete precincts of the 20th century. Peeping through the windows of tailors, tearooms and grocers, we explore everything from the toyshops of yesterday (where curiosities were sold for adults, not children) to the birth of brands we still shop at today. Vibrant and enticing, this book is an essential reflection on how we shopped and lived in days gone by, and what the future may bring. Although the book covers all of Great Britain (with some superb illustrations and photographs), there's a whole chapter about Norwich and also about King's Lynn, and mentions lots of now-bygone shops we all loved to visit not so long ago. Bustling with rich detail, historical vignettes and surprising wares, this is the story of Britain's best-loved but ever-changing public space, which illuminates, humorously entertains and provides vital context for the big decisions we face about the future of the high street.

Annie is an historian, cook, broadcaster and writer specialising in the history of food and dining from around 1600 to the present day. She is the resident food historian on Radio 4's *The Kitchen Cabinet*, and has presented t.v. history documentaries, including *Victorian Bakers* and *The Sweetmakers*.

### Thursday Walks With An Interest

So far this year we have walked on the first Thursday of every month, setting out from Long Melford, Norton, Shotley, Ixworth, Wickhambrook and most recently Wyverstone.



The Wyverstone walk was led by a member with extensive knowledge of the local history. We started at the village hall where we took a group photograph by the village sign pictured. The sign was made by a local man and shows a gamekeeper with his dog and a blacksmith shoeing a heavy horse. The open book at the top is thought to represent the Domesday Book and a cross above represents the church.

The circular route of around five miles took us around and through the fields of Wyverstone and Westhorpe with plenty of sunshine and fine views. We stopped to visit Westhorpe church where we learned all about Mary Tudor, Queen of France. Queen Mary's second husband Charles Brandon lived at Westhorpe Hall and the couple worshipped at that church. Mary Tudor is buried at St Mary's church in Bury St Edmunds.

From there it was not far back to Wyverstone in good time for a few of us to move on to lunch together at Enzos in Bacton.

Lynda Heywood

### Garden Visits

We have enjoyed two garden visits so far this summer.

In May we visited [Houghton Hall](#) where we were split into two groups for a guided tour which was followed by lunch in their lovely cafe.

In July the venue was [The Old Vicarage](#) garden at East Ruston, a beautiful, 32 acre modern garden containing many garden rooms with herbaceous borders, gravel gardens, sub-tropical gardens, a box parterre, sunken rose garden, Mediterranean garden, Desert Wash and a large woodland garden — there really is so much to explore.

One of the flamboyant owners, Alan Gray, came on the coach to welcome us and give a brief talk.

The gardens are absolutely spectacular.

Tina Taylor