Doncaster u3a

October - November 2026



Registered Charity No. 1074577

Message From The Chair



Hello everyone.

A lot has happened over the summer. The UK now has a new Prime Minister. We have experienced the warmest summer since records began with July being the driest month on record. We have witnessed a partial solar eclipse – often seen as a bad or good omen. Arthur Fery nearly got to the Wimbledon final and we didn't win the world cup (again).

Over the summer my wife and I have enjoyed some weekends away, Highclere Castle and the Battle Proms, and more local days out, in particular I would recommend Mother Shipton's Cave in Knaresborough. A lot of people we met and talked to on the day had been when children but as adults they, and we, found it more interesting and beautiful than I thought it would be, we are already planning to go back for another day out. As I write this message we are packing to head off for a week or so to the Highlands of Scotland, near the historic town of Beauly, to fulfil our grandparent duties. A potentially tiring time keeping little hands and minds busy, but on the plus side, a very beautiful and historic area.

Every 3rd Monday of the month, with the exception of August, our Members Meeting involves a talk provided by invited presenters. During June and July, I attended talks provided by Chris Stanbury, 'Pink Hat Man', a fascinating talk about a 'stroll' from John O'Groats to Land's End and back again on behalf of the Charity Hope and Homes for Children, and a big thank you to the members who contributed £259.60 to the Charity. The talk by "the Young Shepherdess", Gracie Arnold was very entertaining and informative, who'd have thought that some sheep have 'two' coats – outer and inner? A talk on the Mansion House given by Jackie Gladden was very informative and educational, a gem on our doorstep. The talks will resume September 21st with a talk by Elizabeth Hallet on 'Life as a District Nurse'. I invite everyone to take advantage of attending these talks which are informative, educational and often surprising.

Coffee mornings continue to draw a crowd, with a number of regulars keeping order (of a kind). Held every Tuesday, from 10.30 am (ish) to

1.00pm (ish) at the Powerhouse, members meet up for a natter and exchange news while enjoying refreshments from the café, my favourite being coffee and fruit scone. New Members are urged to drop in and give it a try with potential new members invited to come and join us. It is a great place to meet new people have a chat and learn more about your Doncaster u3a.

Let us enjoy what is left of this record-breaking summer and file the memories away for future conversations as we all prepare for a cooler 'mellow autumn' with the lights needing to be switched on earlier every evening.

Enjoy life, I hope that everyone stays well.

Michael

Welcome to our New Members

Karen Gleadhill. Robert Gleadhill,

Jacqueline Nutbrown, Rita Beresford, Alan Cable,

Willie Fry, John Morgan, Lynn Gibbs, Carol Hoar,

Jayne Gill, Ann Parkin, Dina Workman

Thanks to everyone for their articles in this newsletter - please send articles of the next one to **nraynsford.u3a@gmail.com** by 21/10/26. Thanks to **David Daniels** for the cover photos in this issue. Remember that you can read old newsletters on our website - that is also the perfect way to contact trustees or group leaders. Alternatively you can leave a message on **07735436176.**

Travel Group

On the 28th July it was a hot sunny day when u3a members boarded quite a full bus for a lovely day out to Cresswell Crags.



Dating back centuries there is a cave that has the only ancient wall engravings of animals in Britain. The area borders Nottingham and Derbyshire.

The area has a lovely lake in a limestone Gorge where there are caves and crags. There are many caves to visit 9 of significance with wall art and for our group we were given a guided tour of one of the caves. We were shown bones and a skull found in the cave along with tools made by our past ancestors.

The tour was very good and we had to bend down quite low to get deeper into the cave. It was quite dark and it was compulsory that we wore helmets and head torches. Later some departed to the beautiful visitor centre where there is a lovely cafe for lunch. Seating was arranged indoors and outdoors amongst the rustic garden areas. The centre itself is a museum and I was amused to find that one of our meeting areas was at the Hyena



which looked like a stuffed Hyena. Some of the group walked a short way along a country path to the next place we were visiting.



Webeck Estate is 15000 acres owned by the Duke of Portland. Entry is free and worthwhile visiting it has a farm shop tea room garden centre and shop selling lovely works of art pottery etc. There is also an interesting museum and an Abbey

All in all the day was a fabulous day out thanks to Wendy for organising the trip.

Julie Gill

German Beginners Group

Well, after a couple of months of building up a strong vocabulary base, the sessions will be changing to put it all into practice!

Future sessions will be divided into four sections - two will be speaking only in German, around given themes. One section will look at issues arising from the speaking and the remaining section will prepare for next time. We will see how it goes! We will all be timid to start with, I am sure, but we will improve and the group members are willing and able as well as highly supportive of each other.

Wir üben!

Paula Harmer

Gracie Arnold:

Becoming a Young Shepherdess

On 29th June a 19-year-old force of nature by the name of Gracie gave a talk on her journey to become a young shepherdess.

Her talk took you through her life events and experiences with her enthusiasm for her calling shining through. There was also a chance to handle fleeces from differing breeds and sheering tools.



As a first generation farmer from a family of farriers Gracie did not, as a young girl, expect to be wrestling sheep to the ground, walking through deep mud in wellies and avoiding spitting llamas. Her musical talents took her to RADA where she played the harp to high level, but her independent nature was always to the fore– she just loved farming and sheep in particular.

Her go get 'em approach and energetic enthusiasm was clear throughout the talk. From painting her tractor pink and driving it to her prom, to attending her first sheep shearing course at the age of 15 to setting up her own business after leaving school, GA Livestock Services, which offers sheep shearing, livestock scanning, hoof trimming, shepherding, injecting, worming, electric fencing, faecal egg count testing and more whilst continuing to train as an auctioneer.

Her talk covered the reactions of small holders who upon seeing who had turned up to shear their sheep greeted her with "I didn't expect a lass", or those who gave her advice on how to do the job

that she was trained for. It also covered how she dealt with those reactions, some of which were comical, and also how over time those same small holders came to respect her and have become regular customers.

She explained how sheepshearing was an animal welfare necessity which helps to keep sheep free from parasites and by removing the fleece, that has kept the sheep warm during the winter, helps keep the sheep more comfortable during the summer. The sheepshearer also has the chance to check the sheep for any health issues.

Gracie was very passionate about the use of wool and is a great supporter of British farming and the British wool industry in particular. She explained how wool is the most natural and sustainable of products, wool is a durable, natural, renewable fibre produced by sheep that are already an essential part of the British farming system. Sheep grow a new fleece every year, making wool a continually renewable resource. It is biodegradable, durable, breathable and versatile, with uses ranging from clothing and furnishings to insulation with innovative new products being developed, wool offers a sustainable alternative to many synthetic materials.



When Gracie tells you that wool is the super material, her enthusiasm, passion and youthful exuberance forces you to believe it.

Michael Regan

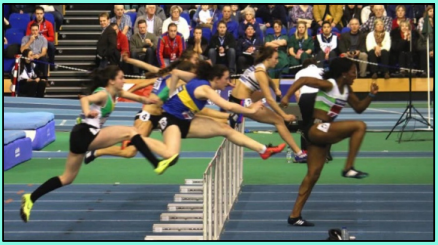
Have You Visited Our Facebook Community Yet?

If you haven't yet discovered our Facebook group, we would love to invite you to take a look. It's a wonderful, friendly space where our members share ideas, information and activities. You'll find a wide range of interest groups, including Photography, Art, Theatre, Trips out and many more. Whatever your interests, there's a good chance you'll find like-minded members to chat with, exchange ideas and enjoy activities together.

Here's a small selection of the lovely photos our members have recently shared on Facebook.









Another popular feature is that members regularly post details of their own days out. From countryside walks and visits to local attractions to coffee mornings, lunches and other social events, there's always something new to discover.

Whether you're looking for inspiration, new friendships or simply want to keep up with what's going on, our Facebook group is well worth exploring. There's no pressure to post—you can simply browse, enjoy the content and join in whenever you feel ready.

Our Facebook group is strictly private. This means that only

approved members can see who is in the group and what is posted. Anything you see or share remains completely safe within our community and cannot be viewed by the general public. If you're not already a member, we'd love to welcome you. Once you've requested membership, one of our administrators will review and approve your request. Please answer all of the membership questions when you apply - they're super quick and only take a minute to complete. We can only approve applications that are fully completed. Thanks, and we hope to see you in the group soon!

To join our Facebook group click here

Helen Wynn

Chris and Diane Woolven – Race for Life.

First a big thank you to all who donated and enabled us to raise in excess of £600 for Cancer Research UK. We had planned to complete the event in Doncaster, but unfortunately, perhaps due to overenthusiastic training, I suffered a foot injury a couple of days before. This meant we had to find the next "Race for Life" meeting which took place at Clumber Park on Sunday 28th June, just at the end of the heatwave.

It was very hot and our times for the race were not the best but we still completed the 5 km course in a very respectable time, particularly as the average age for entrants was probably around 30 and at least half of them walked the whole course. Altogether the day raised more than £21,000.



Chris Stanbury

Walk from Lands End to John O'Groats (and back again)

To celebrate his milestone 70th birthday, Chris Stanbury embarked on an extraordinary 2,635-mile walking adventure from Land's End to John o' Groats and back again. Fuelled by a lifelong love for exploration and a desire to maintain his health, Chris dedicated this 146-day journey to raising funds for Hope and Homes for Children, a charity he has passionately supported since 2002.



The epic trek required nine months of meticulous preparation. Chris utilised route-converter software to splice together national trails for his northbound journey and canal and river paths for his return southbound. To prepare for the physical toll, he trained in harsh, wet, and cold conditions, ultimately refining his gear down to a

lightweight 12-to-15-kilogram pack. His essential kit included a trekking pole, tent, minimal clothing, a water filter, and vital tech gear. Friends supported his logistics from afar by tracking his progress and mailing replacement boots when needed.

The physical reality of the walk was staggering. Chris averaged over 18 miles a day, took 5.7 million steps, and climbed a total elevation of over 272,000 feet while navigating iconic paths like the Pennine Way and the Cotswold Way. Describing his mindset as cautiously reckless, Chris carefully managed his health, nutrition, and hygiene on the trail. He pushed through extreme weather conditions, including a severe thunderstorm and an episode of heatstroke. He also tackled gruelling terrain, from the deep bogs of the Scottish Highlands to the poorly marked sections of the John o' Groats Trail. Despite these hardships, his mental resilience kept fear and loneliness at bay.

The true highlights of his journey lay in the vibrant wildlife, breathtaking vistas like High Cup Nick, and the countless connections he made with fellow walkers and local characters. In a surprising fundraising twist, Chris discovered that media appearances and social media generated very few donations. Instead, his most powerful fundraising tool was the charity T-shirt he wore; the vast majority of his financial support came directly from the generous people he encountered along the wayside.

Ultimately, Chris returned home a bit slimmer but deeply fulfilled. His incredible journey stands as a powerful testament to human endurance, the impact of grassroots charity fundraising, and the profound joy of connecting with both nature and people.

Writing Group - HEAT

In the shadowy space in the long row of garages, a variety of cars begin to assemble, their rasping exhaust notes silenced in turn, as they formed up facing the morning light beyond the open doors. A rising clatter of chatter being punctuated by the wheezing of foot-pumps, clicking of bonnet catches and closing of car doors.

“Drivers Briefing!” summoned the fire-proof overall clad gathering to shuffle into an attentive assembly. Reports of sunshine and increasing temperature, safe overtaking instructions, general safety rulings, flagged warnings and orders to be obeyed.

A hundred years ago a winding tarmac was folded around and through the forested, hilly Ardennes landscape to form the Spa Francochamps Grande Prix racing circuit.

Twenty five years ago, my partner and I, watched Michael Schumacher steer his screaming, blood red Ferrari around the circuit claiming the chequered flag of victory here in the Belgium.

A few years later returned, this time to explore the worlds longest F1 race track directly from the driving seat of my own car, all of the nineteen bends, from their sever cornering angles, engine straining climbs to the plunging flat-out descents stretching tyre rubber and human sinuses.

I returned to my car, pulled on the full-face helmet and fire-proof gloves before climbing onto the roll-cage to slide down into bucket seat of my ‘7’ the original Lotus 7 designed in the 50’s. The lightweight ‘space-frame’ is clad in a simple aluminium body, at the front, cycle wings exposing the race-tuned double wishbone suspension supporting light alloy wheels clad in race bred tyres. Compared with its neighbouring Porsches, BMW, Ferraris sporting 3,4 or 5 litre engines its design made the power to weight ratio favourable.

Anticipation…

A rotating hand signal as engines burst into life

A crescendo of tuned exhaust notes echoing around the workshops

Breathing… Heart rate…

Final check, six point harness, oil pressure, temperature gauge rising

Marshal's wave began the orderly procession of cars eased into the sunshine

Speed restricted as the line led to sharpe right around the block,

Throttles blipped, hot oil and exhaust fumes held in the still air

Engine coolant warming as circulating oil was pumping

Pit-lane marshal indicating all clear as each swung onto the awaiting track

'This is it…'

The circuit drops steeply, allowing the engine to rev rapidly through the gears

80, 90…100 plus

The suspension compressed as the track dips suddenly through Eau Rouge

Before the sharp climb toward the Kemmel straight

Time to breath, see the sunlight streaming through the bordering lines of pines

A little snatched overtaking as the line as cars approach Les Combes chicane

Right… left… right… no passing on bends…

Then tight right hair-pin at Bruxelles

Then vicious ‘no name’ corner sharp left dropping dropping…

Understeering with the front washing out over the ribbed kerbs

Rat a tat tat… heart rate peak… settles back straight, back in control

Phew… breath again after a long drop around Pouhon long, fast left turn

Fast, fairly straight section, though bends at Campus and Stavelot

time to think, to assess, feels hot now!

Engine temperature gauge a little high…

Tyres now up optimum pressure as flexing and heat raise by 5 or 6 psi

Pushing 8,000 revs now through gentle, wide curves to Blanchimont…

Hard on the brakes and block change down to second through the ‘Bus Stop’ chicane… a squeal from the rear inside tyre…

The rows of empty stadium seating declare the start/finish straight before

Severe braking then following the racing line to cut to the apex of the renowned La Source hairpin where thirteen cars collided at the start of the Grande Prix in 1998

That’s one lap… physical heat and mental heat!

Ian Barkley

Gardening Group

On the 8th of July the gardening group met. The topic of the day was ‘Flower Arranging’. All members followed a step-by-step approach using equipment and plants provided. I am sure that you will agree that the flower arrangements are beautiful. One arrangement was gifted to Amanda at Prego to show our appreciation for all that she does,

Anona Hermes









City of Doncaster Mansion House

At du3a July '26 Members Meeting we enjoyed a presentation given by Jackie Gladden, Honorary Secretary of the Friends of Doncaster Mansion House.

The Mansion House - what a magnificent architectural example it is!

One of only three surviving Mansion Houses in the country, others being in London and York, our Doncaster version has been at the heart of civic affaires and entertainment for over 270 years. The building is Grade 1 listed and is of outstanding national significance.



If you look up at the Mansion House from the High Street you will see on the very top of the facade, a golden lion carrying a flag. The lion links the Mansion House to Doncaster's historic past. It was one of the heraldic badges used by Edward IV who in 1467 gave the town the right to govern itself. The royal charter which set out these privileges is decorated with a lion holding a flag which bears the word DON.

This charter, along with 11 other royal charters granted additional privileges to the borough between 1194 and 1836. In 1507 the Town Corporation bargained with Henry VII to lease all the land and property which the Crown owned in the area.

In the 18th and 19th centuries the income from these estates allowed the Corporation to invest in river navigation, canals, land drainage, land enclosure and turnpike roads.

It also made improvements to new bridges, wider streets and pavements, street lighting, water supplies, a gas works, covered markets, a new racecourse and grandstands, a theatre and the Mansion House.

James Paine was commissioned, in 1844, to design and build Doncaster's Mansion House after having supervised the rebuilding of Nostell Priory near Wakefield in 1737 and thus came to the attention of the Corporation. The Mansion House commission launched Paine's career and over the next 40 years he established himself as one of the great architects of the Palladian Revival in the 18th century.

External steps lead down from the High Street to brick vaulted storage cellars.

The ground floor has 'rooms for the entertainment of gentlemen' and the Grand Staircase leads to the first floor which contains the Grand Room, the Tea Room and the Card Room.

The back stairs lead up from the basement via the 1st floor to the Minstrels' Gallery.

Directly above The Grand Staircase is a room called the Mayor's Bedroom but it was rarely used for that purpose.

Royal visitors over the years include King George & Queen Elizabeth in 1948.

Queen Elizabeth II visited in 1952,1976 and 1994. In 1994 she was present at the 800th anniversary of the first royal charter granted to the town by Richard 1 in 1194.

Princes Alice of Athlone visited in 1936. Prince George, Duke of Kent visited in 1939. Mary, the Princess Royal paid 13 visits between 1929 & 1964 and Princess Margaret visited in 1951, 1964 and 1976. King Charles 111 and Queen Camilla visited on 8th November 1922 to present the Letters Patent conferring City Status.

So, you see we have lots to be proud of!

Simon Hughes

Trip to RHS Harlow Carr

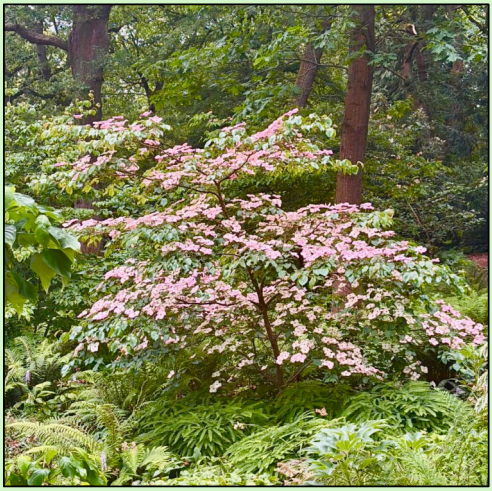
It was a perfect day for visiting a garden in early July when we went to RHS Harlow Carr. Not too hot, not too cold and not raining!



There has always been a Betty's at Harlow Carr since I've been going there. It is accessible without going into the garden, so that was the first stop for a few of us for a coffee and a Fat Rascal – for those who don't know this is an overlarge scone/cake served with butter and a Betty's speciality. It was originally made from all the scraps left over from making scones and cakes, mixed up and baked so as not to waste anything with dried fruit and some glace cherries added for good measure!

Next came the gardens. You are given a map showing the different areas: vegetables and herbs, alpines, stream-side, arboretum, herbaceous borders, a lake and an extensive library. A new addition is the Harrogate Arms Café where some of us had lunch. Just below the Café is the Bath House now a showcase for crafts of all sorts.

The gardens were looking lovely with lots to see. They are good at labelling so if you see a plant you like you can make a note of its name. Although the car parks were full the garden is large enough (58 acres) to absorb a large number of people without feeling crowded.



The exit is via the garden centre and shop (of course). The plants they sell are all good quality and the shop is extensive and good for gardening books, and birthday cards amongst other things. There was just time for a quick cup of tea before the bus home.

Wendy Hattrell

Doncaster Local History Project

Our committee has given a green light to an innovative project.

Let me explain –

We are producing a Doncaster u3a branded booklet - its subject matter being Doncaster local history.

Our Du3a History and Local History Groups are keen to help progress the project.

Of the desired 15 articles we so far have offers for half a dozen.

The booklet presentation is to be about 5 inches square, be bright, colourful, cheerful and as far as possible portray the u3a ethos of 'LEARN LAUGH LIVE'.

It will possibly take a whole year to assemble 15 local history topics, as each may well have to be researched and written. Then we shall need to find suitable illustrations to add a bit of character, to stimulate interest.

Would you like to help?

If you have a passionate interest in any aspect of Doncaster's Local History and would like to write about it, just let us know. It could be the you have an interest but don't have confidence in your writing skills.

Have no concern – we can conduct an interview and produce a transcript.

Ideally topics can be about 1500 words long, but this is arbitrary – any length is OK, so long as the content is absorbing.

Then, of course there is the question of illustrations and if these are the result of du3a artwork or photography, so much the better.

The first topic for the booklet will revolve around a talk given at our July Members Meeting which was entitled 'Discover the Magnificent Doncaster Mansion House'.

SIMON HUGHES

Stretchers July 2026

Retford, the charming little town often referred to as the jewel of the Great North Road, was the venue for the Stretchers' July meeting. As if that weren't enough of a treat, our walk also included a particularly scenic stretch of the Chesterfield Canal. There were thirteen of us assembled in the car park of the King and Miller public house, which some might take as a bad omen. Nevertheless, we all felt lucky to be taking part in this particularly promising walk.



Based on the assumption that we were intelligent enough to look where we were going, it was deemed unnecessary to issue a warning about tree roots and other tripping hazards, so we got off to a flying start. A few hundred yards along the main road, a right turn into a cemetery and then a short path between overgrown gravestones brought us onto the canal towpath.

As we walked along the canal in the shade of the tall trees lining both banks, the dappled sunlight that managed to find its way through the leafy canopy created a dreamy, whalmost magical atmosphere. So much so that, had a hooded wizard with a longite beard and a crooked staff stepped out onto the path in front of us, I think it would have seemed quite unremarkable.

Eventually, we came to some steps that took us onto a path leading to Kings Park, and it was with great sadness and regret that we left the canal behind. But our spirits were, at the same time, raised by the prospect of what was yet to come.

And so it was that we began phase two of what was turning out to be a most remarkable walk—even by Stretchers' standards. After a short pause in Kings Park for a group photo and to admire a lily pond, we crossed the road and entered the town of Retford itself.

I don't know the town well enough to describe the route we took, but we very soon emerged into

Market Square. We went down a road leading off the square, then turned into an alleyway, where we saw a building that was once part of the historic Clarks Dyeworks. The side of the building was completely covered with a hand-painted mural depicting laundry workers of a bygone age. A little further on, we passed an old cannon which, apparently, had absolutely nothing to do with Florence Nightingale.

After some meandering along narrow roads and riverside paths, we found ourselves back in Kings Park. We made our way through the park, down a road and then back onto the old Great North Road, passing many interesting old buildings along the way. Finally, we returned to the King and Miller for lunch, drink and much merry-making.

Many thanks to the organisers of this delightful walk.

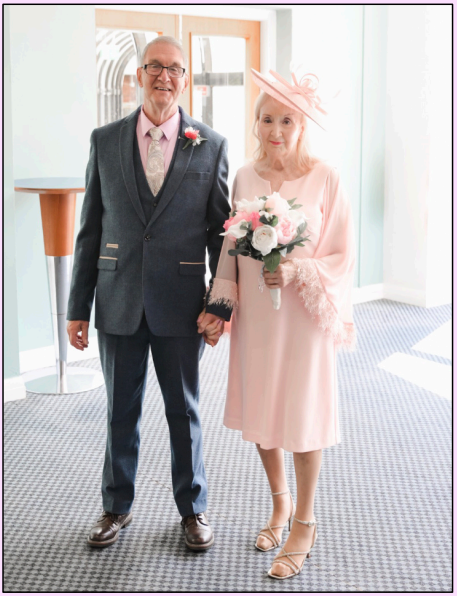
Harry Balaiss

Wedding Announcement

We are pleased to announce the wedding between Joan Condon and John Wade who met at a Doncaster u3a discussion group.

The wedding took place at The Holiday Inn, close to where Joan and John live and was followed by a wedding breakfast for 23 family members and an evening buffet and disco for family and friends.

The happy couple then spent two weeks in Rome for their honeymoon.



Pétanque Group – Activity



Worksop u3a have a pétanque group and a team of eight of its members challenged our du3a to a match. This was held the morning of Wednesday, July 1st at our Hexthorpe Boulodrome.

The two groups of eight players conveniently split into four teams to start, the winners of these went on to play each other and those winners became finalists.

A Doncaster team was the ultimate winner – to everybody's surprise and delight.

It was previously agreed that this match was a 'friendly' so no referees were engaged and any borderline decisions amicably resolved. This worked well, with lots of laughter and light-hearted banter.



After playing we all retired to our normal bolt-hole, the café at the Doncaster Indoor Bowls Club for a bite to eat.

Our member John Helliwell offered himself as a Doncaster reserve but was not needed. John was self-nominated as official photographer for the event and we thank him for his super action shots.



In the photo' of all players taken after play you may notice a gentleman from Worksop. (On the left wearing a yellow top).Brian, who has 90 years to his credit, is an expert player and is proof that this gentle sport can be played at any age.

We Doncaster Players have been invited to a return match in Worksop at some point in September and it seems this may be a regular event, as Worksop members requested a bigger lunch for next summer's match. We can surely arrange that!

SIMON HUGHES

Dear Members and Committee

I have just returned from a six week holiday in France to find a real surprise in amongst my pile of post, a gift from all Members and the Committee of the Doncaster u3a, which quite overwhelmed me, so I would like to express a huge thank you to all for the appreciation shown on retiring from the Committee. You may not know but Paula Harmer our ex-Chair is an extremely good artist and the card was especially appreciated as it was she who created the card.

As you know I spent many years serving on the Committee and thoroughly enjoyed my contribution which I hope made some small improvement to the running of the organisation. I took many roles during my time, among them Minutes Secretary, Group Leader of several groups and as Membership Secretary which I really enjoyed. I shall



still remain as a member and look forward to seeing you all from time to time.

Finally, again a huge thank you and if you ever thought of joining the Committee I can definitely recommend it.

Chris Curtis

Zoom Events

The u3a is all about **Learn, Laugh, and Live** - to this end the National u3a put on regular zoom lectures and events on a wide range of topics. I recently attended sessions as diverse as *The Life and Works of Artemisia* and *The History of Shoes*. Coming up are sessions on *AI*, *Mods versus Rockers*, *The History of The World According to Sheep*, and *Live Cookery Demonstrations*. Details can be found on the National Website and Zoom events are easy to watch on computers or tablets.

THE 2026 UK COACH RALLY

What with almost horizontal rain forecast and the high price of diesel being paid it was great to see all the 50 entrants arrive safely.

My Weekend started on the Friday evening at the Rally HQ hotel on the sea front, for a briefing meeting, that sorted and knowing what the Saturday's jobs were, off I went for my eve meal and then to bed.

I really should explain, although I have recently retired from being a Sales Manager in the new & replacement kitchen world, I have spent almost 20 years of my younger working life in the coach travel industry, and 15 years of that as an owner driver. Hence the coach interest. When I was an owner driver at one point with a Volvo Irizar 49-seater executive coach I had a contract which was a weekly service from Leeds/Manchester/Birmingham/London & Dover to Antibes, outward on a Friday, returning from Antibes on a Sunday evening, it was a summer service to various caravan sites around Antibes, mainly Camp Du Pylone.

Ironically one of the entrants was the son of the gentleman I sold that coach to, his son driving an Irizar.

Saturday was a brrrr start and high winds and truly horizontal rain that was forecast actually arrived at 09.52 exactly, by that time I was parked on a back road near Rossall [just north of Blackpool], where I was doing the end timing of Regularity number One.



This year the organisers had opted to do timing on a couple of sections, some of the drivers were a little 'nonplussed' about the idea of regularity timing, but all saw it through with a few long faces at the end.

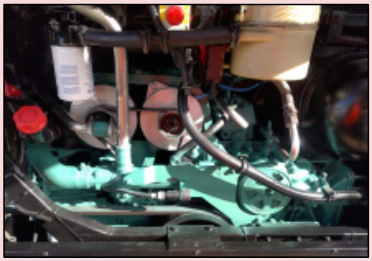
The road run took care of the morning, then starting at 13.30 [ending a little after 5pm], the 'Driving tests' took place on the promenade just close to the Metropole Hotel, lots of people watching the drivers reverse, get close to "Garage" type hazards, and parallel park a coach, anything up to 13.6m in length.

From a Marshal's point of view, corr did it rain, it was that sort of rain that was sharp as it hit your face, the wind had crazy little gusts, the sort of gusts where promotional flags along with tables and chairs were having a 'Fly-by' of their very own.

My job was to make sure the vehicles, once they had done the tests, had a safe onward journey, albeit only half a mile, to the Comedy carpet over the road from the Tower, however they had to cross over a very pedestrianised area, over two way tram tracks and turn right into two way traffic, so as you will imagine so many hazards to observe and thankfully no issues. They went then and parked and started the cleaning in readiness for the Sunday activities Saturday eve was a group meal, with a disco to follow.

SUNDAY

The morning started at 9 with action packed frenzy of coach cleaning, inside and outside, engine compartments too. Overnight the sea fret had seemingly got everywhere and even though most vehicles had been washed in readiness on the Saturday it was wash time again



This Photo shows the engine compartment of a 22 year old coach belonging to Robinson's Tours of Lancashire, it's mileage was 1,354,000 km

Also, as there had been some very close results on the previous day's driving tests they had a mini replay, where 15 vehicles that were from 4 different classes needed a re-classification results test, so back on Marshal duties making sure they completed the tests and then had the safe trip back to the Comedy carpet, via the hazards same as Saturday

The main point of the Sunday is a Concours De Elegance with judges from various coach organisations and transportation bodies. Each having a separate item/ part of the vehicle to judge. Then, at 4pm, the judging was completed and the trophies awarded.It was good to see this year that there were many NEW entrants

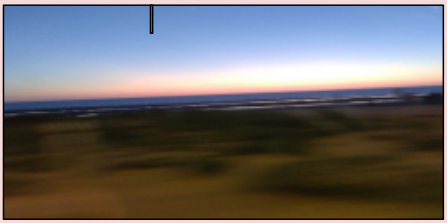


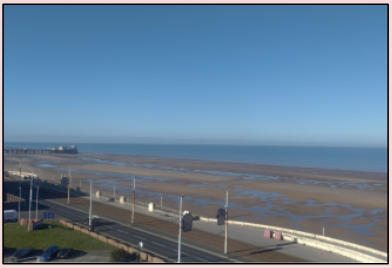
My mini weekend really should have ended there and return home, but I decided to just stay the extra night and enjoy what Blackpool has to offer, so, I popped back to the hotel, and got out of my High-Viz jacket etc, tried to do something with my hair as it had been under my bobble hat most of the day, and then get changed.



I went and did something I have always wanted to do, that is catch the tram and do the full circuit, so my first part of the journey was from the hotel, northwards to Fleetwood, then another tram, back to the Tower, where I alighted and went for my eve meal, and it had to be fish, chips, and mushy peas, then I caught another tram down to Star Gate [the furthest south the tram goes], and another back to my hotel, via the North Station, arriving back in my room for 9.30pm, shower and a bit of telly and to bed

Picture from moving tram of the sunset Sunday eve.





Monday Morning view from the hotel window as I prepared for home. Lovely and sunny.

Thanks for reading.

RICHARD WARD.

Art Group

During a recent session of the art group we were trying out 'Paining With Water' as suggested by Paula. The idea was - choose a flower - paint if using just water - then drop colour onto the water - finally - guide the colour with a palette knife.

Using this process allows the colour to spread to give a loose but very pretty impression of the flower.

The group brought in a range of flowers so that we could have a go - it was fun.











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Our friends at Powerhouse

Du3a phone number: 07735436176

Please send articles for the next newsletter by October 21st

Edited by N. Raynsford