

Newsline December 2025



Museums and Galleries' visit to
Compton Verney

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The approaching end of another year is often a time for reflection, and even more so for me as it's now four months since I had the

privilege of taking on the chair of Southwell u3a. Looking back over that time, it's certainly been an eventful and fulfilling time embracing the three principles of "learn, laugh and live".

As I was also relatively new to the u3a (having been a member for only six months previous) a lot of the learning has been about the role of a trustee and the Third Age trust itself. I've been lucky throughout my working career to have had the opportunity to work for, and learn from, many different organisational cultures. Chairing the u3a has been another great learning opportunity to understand how a volunteer led charity functions very differently to other groups. The great thing about the u3a is the help given by the Trust and, in Nottinghamshire particularly, the fantastic network we have of people offering help and experience.

That extensive experience also includes all of you, and one of the great delights of an organisation such as the u3a is the ability to engage with, and learn from, people whose experiences are so very different to my own. Add on top of that all the learning from the various interest groups I've been actively involved with, and the last four months have been quite a cornucopia of gaining new knowledge.

Of course, all of this has been done with many smiles and laughter. One recent example was from listening to a concert by the recorder group which showed the true spirit of the u3a. A group of people with a varied range of experiences were guided and taught (in this case by Ian and Rik) and came together to put on a great performance with many cheers and smiles.

Adding all of this together then the last months really have been about living, and learning that the u3a can help in so many ways to embrace the third age and the move from work into retirement.

As we head towards Christmas, we should remember that whilst it is a time for family and friends to get

together and have fun, sadly, that's not always possible for everyone. Hopefully, Southwell u3a provides opportunities for members to get together in other sociable ways, including our upcoming pantomime and our coffee mornings and many other group activities. Please get in touch with any members who you think might not be able to meet up with family and friends and make sure they know they are welcome at all these u3a meetings and activities

over the Christmas and New Year period.

Lastly, in case you're in need of a last - minute present for grandchildren, I gather Duolingo has a new app to help them communicate with Santa Claus: It's a teaching aid for North Pol(e)ish!!

[Mike Freemantle](#)

**Deadline for our next Newsline,
No. 75 for January 2026**

Please email articles and pictures to the Newsline team **by 10th December** to ensure inclusion in our next edition.

su3anewsline@outlook.com

Items that arrive after the 10th December will be carried forward to the February edition.

Group news is of particular interest to existing and new members and is an excellent opportunity to review and

promote your group. Updates on social activities are also good to see. **Please could you send photographs in portrait .jpg format and as an attachment NOT within your email or article. This makes it easier for inclusion in Newsline.**

Subject heading: January Newsline

Thank you, [Anne G, Editor](#)

Membership Fees for the year from March 2026

Hello everyone,

Over the next few months, you will be receiving emails from the Membership Secretary, Richmond reminding you that your membership is due for renewal on 1st March 2026.

The subscription fees for 2026, have been **reduced** to £15 for full membership and £12 for associate members.

If you are a taxpayer, please check your reminder email to see if you have completed a Gift Aid Declaration. The details and your submission date are included in the email, about halfway down. If you have not yet completed a declaration, [click here for our form](#) or ask at a monthly meeting.

If you have a membership paid together with your spouse or partner, please note that we can only claim Gift Aid on one payment of £15, even if you may both pay tax. To help us make the most of your support, we encourage separate payments where possible.

If you pay by standing order, please update your payment to the new subscription fee of £15. Most on-line banking systems allow you to set up a standing order on-line. However, a standing order form is available from our membership desk at monthly meetings if this is needed.

Thank you for your continued support.

[Jan \(Treasurer\)](#)

COFFEE MORNING December 2025

Many Southwell u3a members usually enjoy fortnightly [coffee mornings](#) at Southwell Garden Centre, Fiskerton Road. These are very popular and open to all members, giving an opportunity to have a chat and a coffee. In December, due to the Christmas holidays, we have a single meeting on Thursday, 11th December at 10.30am. Most members will stay on after the coffee morning and enjoy a Christmas Lunch together.

There are usually one or two Committee members present for you to talk with at these coffee mornings. It can help other members if you remember to bring and wear your u3a lanyard.

[Marjorie](#)



MEMBER BENEFITS AND DISCOUNTS

DISCOUNT AT LASANI, SOUTHWELL!

In the mood for a curry? **Lasani**, on Church Street Southwell, has agreed to give Southwell u3a members a 10% discount on their bills (food **AND** drink) at their 'contemporary Indian brasserie'. **The offer excludes vouchers.** You will need to show your membership card when you order your meals and drinks and the discount will only apply to u3a members in your party. The discount is on offer all week but not for takeaways, which are already discounted.



MEAL DEAL AT THE HEARTY GOODFELLOW

The Hearty Goodfellow in Southwell has agreed to give a 10% discount on all food (not drinks) to Southwell u3a members for lunch or dinner. You will need to show your membership card **before you order** your meals and drinks and the discount will only apply to individual u3a members in your party.



BAG A DISCOUNT AT ROHAN!

The recently opened Rohan clothing shop in Southwell is generously offering a discount to all u3a members. Members will receive a 10% discount on all **full price** items (not sale items) – just show your membership card on request.



Riviera Travel offer a 10% discount which is paid to the members' u3a group, on many holidays:

PLEASE NOTE: DISCOUNT IS NOT TO INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Members have to show proof of membership at time of booking.

A Cappella:

Christmas is on the horizon!

This month, alongside our much-loved sea shanties and pop favourites, we took a joyful leap back in time exploring the rich textures of medieval harmonies and traditional carols.

We had great fun singing in Latin, tackling two beautiful pieces:

✦ *Gaudete*, believed to date from the 16th century, famously made its way into the UK Top 10 in the 1970s thanks to Steeleye Span—one of the rare Latin a cappella tracks to chart!

✦ *The Boar's Head Carol*, even older, hails from the 15th century and is a delightful “macaronic” piece—blending

English with Latin in a wonderfully festive mix. Huge thanks to Tim and Judith for bringing this gem to our attention!

🎵 Our next gathering will be on Wednesday 17 December, and as always, it promises to be full of warmth, music, and a touch of seasonal cheer. If you've been thinking of joining us, now's the perfect time! No experience needed—just a love of singing and a willingness to explore simple harmonies in good company.

Looking forward to seeing you there,

[Alyson Chaney](#)



Astronomy

November's meeting will revolve around my favourite little 'world', Pluto, but sadly I may have to miss this session if I get called for Jury Service. My able deputy Brenda will set the introduction before showing a fantastic DVD on the New Horizon's flyby in 2015, which revealed some amazing and unexpected facts.

December will be our Christmas 'special' where the topic will be interferometers and gravitational waves. Such waves were predicted by Albert Einstein and can now be detected in deep space when for example two black holes collide.

We will then start the new year with a completely different outlook on Astronomy with a presentation entitled 'What's in a Name". This will give an interesting insight into the names of astronomical bodies and perhaps also into the minds of those who make such decisions.

We meet on the fourth Thursday of every month (except for December which is on the third Thursday) from 10am to 12 noon in the back room of Southwell Library. The dates of the next few meetings are 27th November, 18th December and 22nd January.

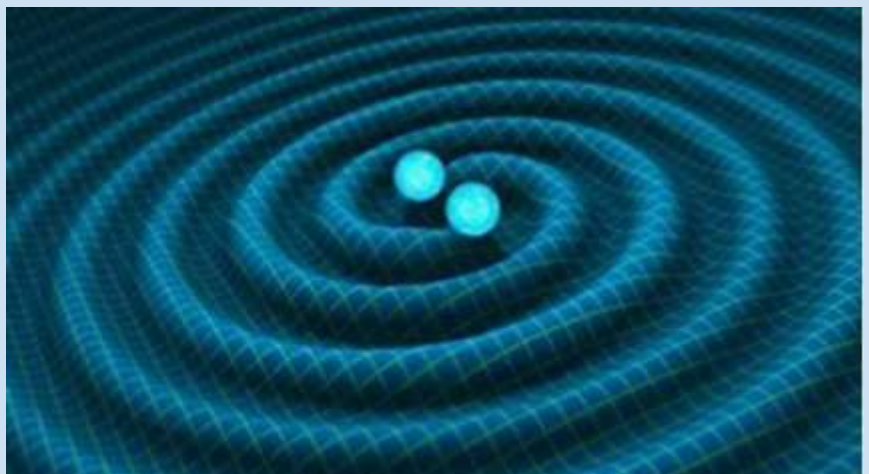
We try to cater for beginners by not making the sessions too technical but with enough content to stimulate the more knowledgeable.

After coffee the audience get the chance to ask questions, comment or offer views, which is I think, an important part of our sessions.

I hope to see as many people as possible at the next meeting. Please see the webpage [Astronomy - Southwell u3a](#) where you can contact me.

Richard Peacock

Gravitational Waves
space.com



Creative Writing

Stone pillars frame the holy place
Cold gloom pierced now by shafts of
light
A pauper kneels with upturned face
And bares his soul before God's might

Beyond the cloisters other rites
On gilded chairs beneath the rood
The Bishop and his acolytes
Are mouthing empty platitudes

Now winter draws its cooling breath
The pauper makes his holy sign
And shudders at the thought of death
The acolyte decants the wine

The holy men debate their faith
Whilst seated round a warming fire
The pauper drifts off like a wraith
His shadow fading 'cross the quire

They find his body in the apse
Then pray to God for his repose
Oblivious to his collapse
Crushed by the tithes that Rome
imposed

Austin Brady



COME DINE WITH US RECIPE

Brian

PORK SAUSAGE, APPLE AND LEEK PIES

It's time for the 'Life of Pie', with these tasty, good value pies for the colder weather. Although originally dating back to ancient Egypt, pies became a very British staple meal in the medieval period. They were at first used as a means of preserving meat, with the meat fillings encased in inedible pastry known as "coffins", before becoming the winter warmer comfort food that we know today.



Ingredients - serves 4

- 8 top-notch thick pork sausages - whatever type you fancy
- 2 medium leeks, washed, trimmed and fairly thickly sliced
- 2 crunchy eating apples (e.g. Cox's), cored and roughly chopped
- 2 tbs plain flour 1 tbsp butter 175ml British cider
- 175ml chicken stock (one stock cube dissolved in hot water)
- 2 tbsp wholegrain mustard
- 320g pack of ready-rolled puff pastry (from chiller cabinet)
- 1 small egg, lightly beaten, for glazing

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan (or use air-fryer). Put the sausages in a small roasting tin and bake for 30 mins, until browned and cooked through. Set aside to cool.
2. Meanwhile, melt the butter in a large frying pan and fry the leeks for 8-10 mins until nearly soft. Add the apples and cook for another 1 minute, then stir in the flour and cook for another 1-2 mins. Gradually stir in the stock and then the cider to make a thickish sauce. Add the mustard, taste and season, and then bubble for about a minute until the sauce is fairly thick.

COME DINE WITH US cont'd

3. Slice the cooled sausages and divide between 4 small pie dishes/tins or 4 medium ramekin dishes – having first checked the dishes are the right size for you to get 4 pie lids out of the sheet of puff pastry. Fill up the dishes with the sauce.
4. Unroll your sheet of puff pastry and cut out 4 pie lids, just slightly larger than the tops of your pie dishes (can use upturned dishes as templates). Lay the pastry over the tops of the filled pie dishes, press the edges around the rims of the dishes and trim off any excess. Glaze the pastry with the beaten egg and make two small slits in the top of each pie with a sharp knife. Bake for 20–25 mins until the pastry is risen and golden. Allow to cool for 5mins before serving.

Goes well with mashed potato and green vegetables. **Enjoy!**

GROUPS NEWS cont'd

Strollers and Shufflers



There are two more opportunities to meet for a stroll this year! The dates are 28 November and 12 December. All walks start at 10 am from near the scout hut. 2026 dates will be given in due course.

Carolyn

Museums and Galleries

Museums & Galleries' September visit to Compton Verney to view various art and ceramics exhibitions and the outdoor Sculpture Park. See also front cover.



Margaret

GROUP NEWS cont'd Photography Group

The Group visited Clumber Park in late October to capture glorious autumnal colours and magnificent fungi. Clumber Park really is at its best at this time of year, and the attached photographs are evidence of this.



Floating Fungi above the Forest Floor
by John Mason



Dappled Colours against the Blue Sky
by Anita Allwood



Eating the Autumn bounty!
by Eibhlin Dunphy



One of our members, **Deb Cook** had her photograph of **Southwell Trail** selected by BBC East Midlands Today for the evening news Weather Watchers section and we are proud of this, particularly because she says she was up very early to capture morning mist but found it was gone and replaced by the beautiful autumn colours.

Pink Hydrangea in the morning
by Brenda Peacock



The Group is already planning an exciting programme for next year and if you want to be part of our activity then do get in touch to join us.

[Graeme, Group Leader.](#)

Third Thursday (Thirsty) Trekkers – Looking for New Walkers!

We have had a cracking first summer season with a full programme of walks each month. There have been a wide range of routes around Charnwood Forest, Grantham Canal, Sherwood Forest, Brierley Forest/Hardwick Hall, Welbeck/Creswell, Vicars Water Park and Laxton. For most of us we have been to places we have not visited before, but above all have found some delicious venues to enjoy a mid-walk lunch!

Like many of the walking groups we are finding that not everyone can attend every walk so we are keen to find new like-minded walkers who would like to join us.

Summer walks are between 9 to 11 miles, but for the winter we are reducing that to 7-9 miles (to make sure we can have a nice lunch and still get back to the cars in the light!) with no more than 400m ascent.

We share cars (with fuel contributions from passengers) and we would like to share planning and recce duties as well – although we are happy to help anyone who is a little less confident with a map.

Come and join us for a walk and see if it is for you. We have a walk later this

month and possibly one in December (albeit more local and perhaps more stops!!).

If you need any more information take a look at our webpage or contact us,

Ben & Sally

SWIG – Wine Group – Looking for more Swiggers

The Southwell Wine Interest Group (SWIG) has been running for quite a few years. It was established to bring together members who broadly share an interest in wine whether that is to further their knowledge of wine or simply to taste a variety of new wines to find out what they enjoy. SWIG is an informal member led group.

We meet 10 times a year on the 4th Monday of each month or a week earlier if we clash with a bank holiday) and we have two social meals, one in July and one around Christmas/New Year – where we look at wine and food pairings.

Members take it in turns to do a presentation and tasting of four different wines based upon a theme chosen by the presenter, which could be a specific grape or country/wine region or retailer – we have had all sorts!

SWIG cont'd

We are looking for 3 new members to take us up to our maximum of 14 (which we think is the maximum tastings we can squeeze out of a bottle).

We share room hire costs (approx. £2/£3 per session) payable in advance and wine costs (approx. £5/£7) on the night.

If you fancy tasting (and hopefully) learning about new wines, please come and join us! No prior knowledge needed – we don't throw new members in at the deep end with presenting until they have experienced a good number of meetings.

Any more information take a look at our webpage or contact us,
Ben and Sally



Trips and Social

1. **Floral Media**

The festive meal at Floral Media on 16th December has been fully booked.

2. **Burns Night**

Forty members have been quick to sign up for the Burns Night social in January.

3. **Quiz and Cake Afternoon Social**

Our usual general knowledge quiz and cake afternoon social is taking place on 9th February at the Rugby club. Teams created on arrival.

£5 tickets on sale at the December and January Monthly meetings. Please message Rosemary Milton if you want to come and cannot make either of the Tuesday meetings.

4. On the 23rd April there will be a **coach trip to Stoke on Trent potteries**. Details to follow but save the date to join us.

Rosemary

Monthly Meetings and Speakers



Our November Speaker

November's talk was changed at the last minute as our speaker had to go into hospital so instead of "The Great American Songbook" we had a talk from Shaun Livsey about "The history of Infectious Diseases" This very interesting and informative and amusing talk attempted to outline our relationship with infectious diseases and how human social developments in history have altered our relationship with various diseases. For instance, the movement of people because of the Industrial Revolution from the countryside to towns where sanitation was almost non-existent and housing on top of one another, facilitating the easy transfer of disease from one person to the next. Previously people had hardly moved from their place of birth for their whole lives.

We dipped into our very long-term lack of understanding and our recent awakenings to the causes of infectious diseases. The positive effect of improved sanitation, vaccination and antibiotics were discussed but to prevent any undue smugness, a

summary of possible and indeed likely new pestilences were revealed.

Particularly relevant to this is global warming which will bring insects used to warmer weathers to the UK such as mosquitos.

However, to cheer us up at the end Shaun mentioned that within about 5 years AI will be able to analyse our various ailments and prescribe specific types and quantities of medicines for each patient to deal with the ailment. This has recently been highlighted on the BBC as a very positive progression.

However, he said that we should continue to develop our DIY skills with particular attention to the making of coffins - woodwork group watch out for an influx of new members!!!

December Meeting

Next month we are changing our format and having a PANTOMIME. This is called "Little Red Whittington" and will be performed by the Argent Players who are local and have existed for 50 years. In honour of this feat, they are trying to perform 50 pantomimes during the year to celebrate, and we have been very happy to help them achieve this aim.

Monthly Meetings and Speakers (Continued)

December Meeting cont'd

Poems and songs about Christmas will also be performed.

The format of the hall will change and the chairs will be arranged differently so please be aware of this and come earlier if possible.

John Cook

u3a
learn, laugh, live

Southwell u3a Concert Coaches—Royal Concert Hall



Our concert coach scheme continues to go from strength to strength, with the first coach of the season on the 30th September selling out all 53 seats, and four further well supported classical concert coaches subsequently. The first concert of 2026 on January 10th has already sold out 8 weeks in advance.

Further concerts this season in 2026 will take us right through to June after which I will get next season's 2026-2027 programme from the Royal Centre and start the cycle all over again.

A huge thank you to all the members who support the coach trips and make my job a relatively easy and enjoyable one! Merry Christmas and a very Happy Musical New Year to you all.

Roger
Concert Trips Organiser



Southwell u3a contacts and other u3a websites:

Southwell u3a:

Southwell u3a website is <https://southwell.u3asite.uk>

Southwell u3a members Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/southwellu3a>

To contact our officers, committee and other postholders:

[Contact - Southwell u3a](#)

For information about our interest groups and to contact our Group Leaders:

[Groups - Southwell u3a](#) Names and numbers are available at our monthly meetings.

Nottinghamshire:

The 34 individual u3a organisations are all federated into the Nottinghamshire Network, which has its own website and magazine:

[Nottinghamshire Network of u3as - Learn, Laugh, Live!](#)

[Latest County "Newsbites" now available](#)

National:

National u3a website is <https://www.u3a.org.uk>

The National u3a organises a range of events and workshops:

www.u3a.org.uk/events

Community Contacts

Southwell Town Council website is <https://www.southwellcouncil.com>, council office admin@southwell-tc.gov.uk or "[Contact Us](#)" page, or 01636 816103

Nottinghamshire County Council website is <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk>

You can contact Notts County Council customer service team via 0300 500 8080. Customer service opening hours: Monday to Thursday: 8:30am to 5pm Friday: 8:30am to 4:30pm

Newark & Sherwood District Council website is <https://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk>, customerservices@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk 01636 650000