



Deeping St. James

Issue No.293 February 2026

The Deepings u3a **NEWSLETTER**

Website: deepings.u3asite.uk

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Market Deeping

Welcome

New members in January: David Brown, Deeping Gate and Hilary Smith, Stamford

NEXT MEETING: 16 February

Unless otherwise stated, all monthly meetings are at the Methodist Church, Deeping St James. Doors open at 9.30am.

PROGRAMME OF SPEAKERS FOR 2026:

16 February 2026: Lincolnshire Emergency Blood Bikes Service

It's not just bikes and it's not just blood! Find out what this charity actually does.

16 March 2026: A detective's tale

Alan Lambert will give us the lowdown about an \$800 million sting.

20 April 2026: Daffodils

Johnny Walkers will tell us all we need to know about daffodils.

MARGARET'S MUSINGS

Dear members

Welcome to your February Newsletter, with details and photos of the activities of many of our groups who contribute monthly. We don't see reports from all our groups; we appreciate that some groups would not want to produce a report every month, but it would be interesting for members if the newsletter editors could include an occasional item from these groups.

We are still open to suggestions for new groups. Please enter your ideas on the sheet by the notices.

A reminder about the Group Leaders' Meeting to be held at the Deepings Community Centre on Tuesday 10 March from 2 -4 pm.

Please arrange to send a representative from your group if you are not able to attend as Group Leader.

I look forward to joining you at our various activities during the weeks ahead.

Best wishes

Margaret

Chair, The Deepings u3a

SUNDAY LUNCH GROUP

The Sunday Lunch is at the Black Horse baston on the 22nd February 12.30 for 1. Please let either Enid or myself know if you will be coming or not by Monday 16th February.

Helen.perkins500@gmail.com phone 01778345674 or Enid on 01778 342936.

Group Leaders: Helen Perkins and Enid Withers

SCIENCE GROUP



The science group met at Vine House Farm for their Christmas meal. Better late than never!

Everyone enjoyed their food and several of us bought some treats from the farm shop.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 17th February when there will be a quiz on all things scientific.

Report by Gill Godden
Group Leaders: Garth Perry

CHURCH MICE



After a worrying time in December when the future of Church Mice was in doubt the group met in January at St John the Baptist Church in Morton. Colin, the churchwarden, gave us a presentation about the church. Often named The Cathedral of the Fens the ninety foot tower and the very high ceilings do give the impression of a cathedral. Built between the mid 12TH Century and the 15th Century the Early English style merges into the Gothic style.

Of particular note are the 15th Century font, the huge 14th Century oak door and the magnificent Victorian stained-glass windows throughout the church. While twenty of us had cups of tea and cake Terry Noble kept the other twenty of us entertained on the organ.

February's visit will be to St Botolph Church in Longthorpe.

Group Leader: Henry Roberts

MONDAY WALKING GROUP



The February walk led by David Scott and myself was from one of our favourite lunching points, also open on a Monday, that being The Burghley Park Golf Club.

18 of us commenced the walk by leaving the Club and heading downhill through St Martins towards Stamford before turning left along the A43 and then quickly right down Wothorpe Road bringing us onto The Meadows. To avoid the anticipated squelchy Meadows we continued along Bath Row before arriving on Tinwell Road. A slight incline took us as far as the Water Furlong allotments before turning left and then right lower down the lane when a very reasonable footpath led us all the way to the

Tinwell Pumping Station and the bridge over the River Welland where, lo and behold, we bumped into our Group Leader who was a late starter but took a different route to the bridge, so there were then 19 of us for the remainder of the walk. Well caught up Steve!!

The next part of the walk had put doubts in our mind from doing the reccy with all the rain we'd had over the past few days and seeing the level of the water under the bridge we had just crossed. The route was across the valley to Easton on the Hill under the A1. Although several of the relevant bridges under the A1 were under water we managed to find one that had a path down one side to enable us to get through. From here it was largely uphill to the village through a couple of muddy areas before and after crossing the railway line, both of which had improved since the reccy. Once through the village it was then an easy walk down the footpath past Wothorpe Towers coming out on St Martins directly opposite the Golf Club where a pleasant lunch awaited us all.



Thank you all for joining us on this six mile walk which at the end of the day turned out to be a far easier walk than we had previously envisaged it might be.

**Report by Godfrey Parkes
Group Leader: Steve Hanson**

LISTENING TO MUSIC GROUP

We started our first meeting of the New Year at Terry Noble's house. As it was our first meeting of 2026, the occasion celebrated the New Year.

An appropriate starting point was the jubilant first movement of Bach's *Cantata for the New Year*.

Interspersed in the programme were a number of popular items taken from the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra's New Year's Day concerts.

To mark the chimes of Big Ben heralding the New Year was Vierne's *Carillon de Westminster* and representing the fireworks from London's South Bank was an extract from Handel's *Fireworks Music*.

The opening movement from Haydn's *Creation (Representation of Chaos)* portrayed the very beginning of time – some 14.5 billion (New) years ago!

The morning ended with a set of variations on *Auld Lang Syne*, brilliantly arranged by John Williams and played by the Boston Pops Orchestra. Here the main tune is played with superimposed passages from other well known (and other less known) pieces. In the end, it was not possible to keep up with and name these other pieces– there were so many.

Our next meeting will be at 10am on 11th February at Phil Jones's house.

Report by Terry Noble, Group Leader

CYCLING GROUP

Thursday 15th January saw our delayed first ride of 2026 (delayed from previous week due to weather) depart with four of us from the Bridge in Market Deeping on an overcast and drizzly morning.



We cycled through Market Deeping and Deeping St James via High Street, Bridge Street, Church Street and Eastgate onto Station Road at the end of Deeping St James and along to the level crossing where we took our photo to include the "local Banksy" artwork. Carrying on from here we turned onto Cranmore Drove and then onto Stowgate Fen Road South and then North up to the Spalding Road. We crossed onto Towngate East and continued back towards Deeping St James.

Here we were going to turn onto Cross Road to Langtoft and then back into Market Deeping for lunch but the rain began to be heavy so we binned that four-mile leg and headed for the Stage for our lunch.

We cycled via Linchfield Road, Brewton Drive, Burchnall Close, Lady Margaret's Avenue, Godsey Lane and through the Shopping Centre car park to the Stage where, after drying out a little we enjoyed a lovely lunch. Due to abandoning the Langtoft leg of the journey what should have been a 14-mile ride was curtailed to nine-miles but a couple of the riders saw some areas of Deeping St James (around Brewton Drive) that they had not seen before.

Next ride will be on Thursday 12th February, so if anyone would like to join us you would be very welcome.

Report by Jim Torrance, Group Leader

STROLLERS

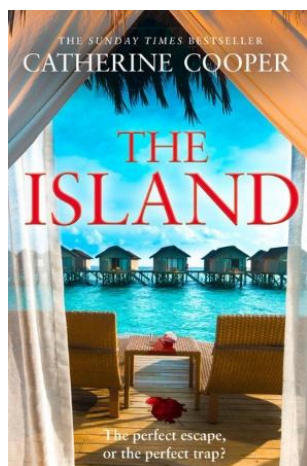
We started this year's activities with a group lunch held at the Ruddy Duck at Peakirk. There was a good turnout, with 16 of us taking part and all seemed to enjoy their meals, talking about the strolls in 2025 and hopefully looking forward to the programme this year

We kick off 2026 with a change from the programme devised as Anne is unable to lead the walk this month. Instead, we will start with a walk at Orton Waterville and Orton Longueville in Peterborough.

That will take place on Friday 27th February, meeting at the Windmill on Cherry Orton Road. Members of the group will be given more details shortly.

Report and Group Leader: Bob Deller

MONDAY READERS



Our book for this month was *The Island* by Catherine Cooper, which is a psychological thriller, set mainly on a luxury holiday resort island in the Maldives. The plot involves links between the past and the present, revenge for past crimes, and mysterious deaths, all brought to a final 'tying the loose ends up' finale.

When a select group of influencers and journalists receive an exclusive invitation to a luxury resort in the Maldives, it seems like the ultimate press trip, but when the island is cut off during a storm and people start dying, it's obvious that all is not what it seems among the guests.

This book provoked mixed reactions, but for almost all of us there were reservations. It was generally agreed that the exotic luxury resort was well described (especially in the middle of a very cold spell!) but few people liked the characters, which were variously agreed to be poorly drawn. The plot, which involved two timelines, was mildly interesting, but the ending seemed contrived, as if the author had just worked

in all out on Post-it notes, without really linking it to character, or a natural feeling evolution.

However, if you're looking for a thriller to pass some winter evenings in an easy way, this would probably suit you. We felt it was a possible good book for a holiday, too, being fairly undemanding.

Report and Group Leader: Liz Waterland

JAZZ, SWING AND BIG BAND GROUP

January report

Our meeting on 29th January was at Phil Jones's house. We listened to an eclectic mix of what one might call "relatively modern jazz". We heard pieces which varied enormously but somehow had a common theme – whatever one's taste in music (and jazz in particular) the programme was unanimously praised for being, interesting, different and easy to like.

We started with Bill Oddie singing the humorous *Sick Man Blues*, before Dan Cassidy (the brother of Eva Cassidy) led his group in *Coquette* and followed it with an original rendition of *Tiger Rag*. Bill Bruford's *Up North* surprised with the tune being led by Bruford on his electronic drum kit, before we were entertained the Peter Bernstein Quartet.

Sweet Georgia Brown evoked memories of the Harlem Globetrotters, first performed by Captain Beefheart and then by the a capella gospel group Take 6, who followed with *Seven Steps to Heaven*. Two numbers by the Peddlers preceded the immortal Alberta Hunter singing the *Downtown Strutter's Ball* and *I've Got a Mind to Ramble* before we returned to Bill Bruford with *Candles Still Flicker in Romania's Dark*.

Our penultimate group was Beatlejazz who performed *Piggies* (from *The White Album*) and a *Hard Days Night*. A most entertaining morning was completed by Nigel Kennedy playing *Midnight Blue* as the clock struck noon!

Followed by the belated Jazz, Swing and Big Band Appreciation – November 2025

Owing to a clerical error (mine I should add!) a report of our last meeting of 2025 in November failed to get to the editors to be published in time. Somehow, we got to a new year.

We didn't meet in December as our normal date always seems to coincide with the enhanced activities of the Christmas season but that's no reason to not mention the way that Colin Wall managed to see us end the old year in style. We met at his house where we were thoroughly entertained by a superb selection of music, which unusually these days, was exclusively sourced from vinyl – remember? LPs turning at 33rpm played through Colin's excellent system. We are inclined to comment of the quality of some of the recordings we get to hear, especially as many can be 50, 60 and some even 100 years old. And generally, the quality is extraordinarily good. This is true of old recordings stored on CD, and when played from vinyl, carefully stored and handled correctly hi-fidelity is assured.

Colin gave us a great mixture of music that fits our group name. What better introduction to a listening session was *When The Saints Go Marching In*, by Louis Daniel Armstrong? The next performance was by the Jug, Jook and Washboard Bands playing *Rukus Juice* and *Chittlin*.

There were too many pieces of music to mention all of them but we went from The Original Dixieland Jazz Band to the Modern Jazz interpretation of Bach, *Air on the G String* as played by Jacques Loussier.

Colin has brought us a view of The Blues, and how music developed over the years. A superb illustration of one of the greatest Bluesmen was *I Just Want To Make Love To You*, by Muddy Waters.

Yet next came *Nuages*, by Django Reinhardt et Le Hot Club of France. This was followed by Joshua Rifkin, a famous interpreter of Scot Joplin with *Stop Tim Rag*, always incredibly listenable music.

As I said, Colin provided a feast of music delicacies for our consumption over a very happy couple of hours. Plus, he had correctly identified that we had no particular Christmas celebrations planned. So he kindly laid on some wine (juices for those not partaking) and some nibbles. We are a sociable group anyway, of course, but he set a little extra time for us to simply meet in what I would call a friendly get-together which ended the year for our group in style.

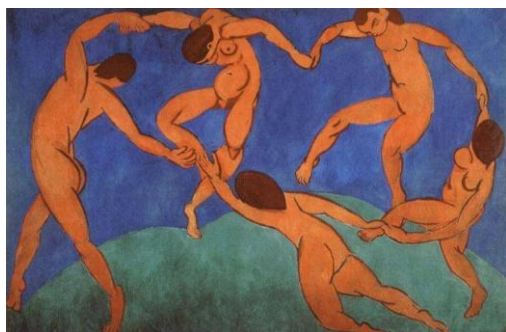
Thanks to Colin for his attention to details in producing a lovely music morning and his hospitality.

Next meeting at the home of Terry Noble on 25 February 2026.

Report by Phil Jones

Group Leaders: Phil Jones, Anne Jones

ART APPRECIATION GROUP



In January, we had a social event. Hilary provided the quiz which comprised of three parts; identify the paintings, unscramble the anagrams and name the cities where the galleries were situated. Barbara had also prepared a quiz related to her talks. We decided to keep that for another day (spoiler warning).

Sandra did a simple picture quiz where four well known paintings were missing a vital piece.

Members brought a food contribution and everyone enjoyed a chat before the brain work began!

Thank you to everyone who attended.

Members were given the programme of events and Margaret gave details of a planned visit to Northamptonshire in July.

Nest month Barbara is talking about The Pitmen Paintings.

PS. What is the title of painting that is included with this report? Who was the artist?

Report by Group Leader: Sandra Jones

CRAFT GROUP



Thanks to Kath Allen for her hospitality at our January meeting and for the idea of using quilling made into a pendant.

Fiddly definitely, but satisfying to complete!

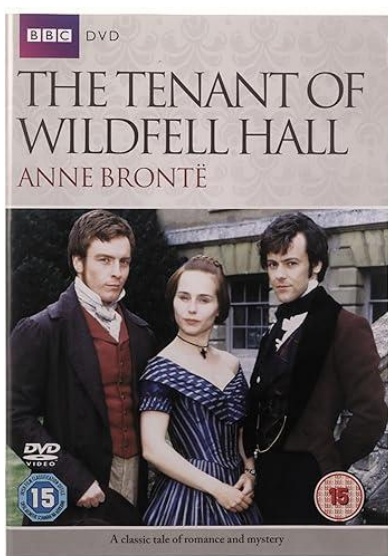
Next meeting on Monday 16th February. See you then.

Report Liz Noble

Group Leader Pam Ready

BOOKWORMS

Written in 1848, *'The Tenant of Wildfell Hall'* by Anne Brontë is considered today as one of the first feminist novels. Anne's realistic portrayal of alcoholism, marital abuse, and the power men could wield over women in marriage shocked Victorian society.



The plot: Gilbert Markham, a local farmer, reveals in letters to a friend that he has fallen in love with the mysterious Helen Graham, who has recently moved into the derelict Wildfell Hall with her young son. Reclusive and mysterious, her presence attracts gossip and rumour among the locals.

Trusting Gilbert, Helen lends him her diaries. They reveal that she has escaped from her handsome but alcoholic, abusive and adulterous husband – a hugely courageous (and illegal) act in Victorian England. Learning her husband is dying, Helen returns briefly to her marital home, but even on his deathbed her husband refuses to repent his former ways. Overcoming all obstacles – you've guessed it - Gilbert does eventually marry Helen!

'Marmite' perhaps best describes our reaction to this classic text. Some Bookworms enjoyed Anne's writing – realistic, clear, with a strong sense of morality and purpose, and a clever narrative framed by letters and diary entries. Others found her style wordy, convoluted, old-fashioned and difficult to enjoy. But all sympathised with Anne's unflinching and realistic portrayal of

a strong and deeply moral woman fighting the prejudices and laws of a society where all power in marriage resided with men. A question we should ask ourselves: how would Anne Brontë portray relationships today?

Report and Group Leader: Tom Baldwin

NATURAL HISTORY GROUP

We are so fortunate to have such a wonderful nature reserve on our doorstep: Deeping Lakes. This is where nine of us met for our January meeting, despite the light rain and mud! The reserve is a great credit to the folks who volunteer here, some of whom are members of our group.

We spent time in the hide looking for the resident long-eared owl but were not lucky this time. Despite being a large owl and so close to the hide, it can be incredibly difficult to see. Did you know that all of the five common owls of the UK have been seen at the reserve? They are the barn, tawny, little, short-eared and long-eared owls.

Report by Beverley Tegala, Group Leader

POETS AND THEIR POETRY

We met on a very cold, bleak afternoon to enjoy this month's selection of poems with the theme "People". Starting with the wonderful Benjamin Zephaniah's poem *People will always need people*.

Next one of our favourite poets, Brian Bilston and his poem *People Person People*. Followed by *IF* by Rudyard Kipling, and *Differences of Opinion* by Wendy Cope. We had *Lines Written In Early Spring* by William Wordsworth and a lovely poignant poem by Rowan McCabe, *Bubbles*.

Then we had a wonderfully funny poem written by one of our members Mike, *Mrs Brown Explains. Six Characters In Search of Something* by Jamie McKendrick was next. Our next offerings were *Gran's Doss House* by Howard Peach and *Our Pier: Orkney*. By George Mackay Brown. We had a charming poem called *Shrove*

Tuesday by Celia Warren. Lastly *The Silent Coal Shoveler* and *The Death Of Judy Wazorick* both by David I Rogers.

A very enjoyable afternoon doing what we love. Hosted by Susanne.

Report and Group Leader: Susanne Hoadley

THURSDAY GARDENING GROUP

The first Thursday morning in February was gloomy, cold and very wet when nine members of the Thursday Gardening Group gathered for their first meeting of 2026.

Coffee, biscuits and warm conversation in Margaret and David Scott's lovely conservatory soon lifted the spirits and we all enjoyed David's selection of photographs of garden visits made by the members on warm sunny days as a pre-cursor to the main item of the day – another of David's fiendish but funny quizzes.

After much passing, wild guessing and laughter, Alistair was the proud winner of a mini garden gnome!

As we were unable to venture into the garden, David's photo of one of their Daphnes, blooming proudly is included with this report. A promise of the Spring to come. David assured us they exude a lovely smell on better days.

Our thanks to Margaret and David for their hospitality. All members send their love to absent members Mike and Sandy and best wishes for Sandy's continued recovery to better health.

Our March meeting will be for coffee, chat and some retail therapy at Baytrees Garden Centre near Spalding.



**Photos: David Scott and Ann Pettitt
Group Leaders: Kay Parker and Ann Pettitt**

HISTORY GROUP

Our January History talk was given by Philippa Massey and it was a really interesting look at the leisure times of the working classes throughout the centuries. It was called **Stamford Low Life**.

Leisure for the working class had to be free and wasn't readily available as they laboured from dawn to dusk in order to keep a roof over their heads and food on the table.

We were shown statistics relating to drunkenness and keeping a disorderly house. In other words:

prostitution!



Bull running was a big event in Stamford and stopping it proved difficult.

This painting by Smeeton is called **Bringing in the Bull** and various characters in the photo were highlighted. They were also mentioned in the statistics!

Philippa had some very witty comments in her talk. She led us through the centuries and ended up in modern times with some very good photographs of the fairs and the

menagerie that arrived in Stamford. (This also came to Deeping.)

George Wombwell's tomb in Highgate is pictured here. His menagerie was the famous one that visited Stamford and Deeping. The arrival of the menagerie was a great event. One of the slides showed a lion sitting on top of the cart being drawn in the pageant's procession.

There was so much information it is impossible to put it in a report.

Next month, the talk is being given by Liz Parkinson and will focus on the WW2 Commemorations and will relate to the Deepings.

Thank you to everyone who helped today and who turned out on a very miserable day of weather.

**Report by Sandra Jones
Group Leader: Sandra Jones**

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS
2025/26**

Chair	Margaret Beardshaw
Secretary	Mary Martin
Treasurer	Stuart Wilson
Membership Secretary	David Perkins
Group Co-ordinator	Tom Baldwin
Gift Aid Secretary	Anne Burton
Committee Member(s)	Phil Jones

**Non-Committee/Supporting
roles**

Speaker Arrangers	Gill Godden Lynn Ayres
Newsletter Editors	Sandra Jones Ruth Griffiths
Newsletter Distribution	David Scott
Newsletter Distribution Coordinator	Liz Noble
Webmaster	David Perkins
Media Equipment Co- ordinator/Asst. Webmaster	David Scott

**DEADLINE FOR REPORTS: 6 MARCH 2026
SEND TO: NEWSEDITOR@DEEPINGSU3A.COM**