



Deeping St. James

Issue No.295

April 2026

The Deepings u3a **NEWSLETTER**

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Market Deeping

Welcome

New members in March: Maggie McKay, Market Deeping; Margaret Ogden, Market Deeping; Kate Bird, Deeping St James

NEXT MEETING: 20 April

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

PROGRAMME OF SPEAKERS FOR 2026:

20 April 2026: Daffodils

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

18 May 20 26: Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies

Martin Lloyd explains how three passports have played an influential role in the course of history.

15 June 2026: Life of a TV journalist

Award-winning reporter Bharat Patel has covered major stories both in the UK and overseas, everything from earthquakes to interviewing the world's oldest donkey and the parrot who spoke five languages.

MARGARET'S MUSINGS

Dear members

Thank you to group leaders for attending the meeting with the committee in March. This was a productive meeting and Tom Baldwin, the Groups Coordinator, includes, in this newsletter, a summary of the matters discussed. Please continue to share your ideas, suggestions for new groups etc. with us.

I must give my apologies for the April general meeting as I shall be visiting my son in Stirling. A trip to Scotland inevitably raises the question of weather! In Hunstanton for a few days this week we enjoyed a lovely warm, sunny day immediately followed by a howling gale overnight.

The annual Church Mice/Art Appreciation visit on 21 July is to the Church at Higham Ferrers and the Rennie Mackintosh House in Northampton. This is open to all u3a members and details will be available at the meeting, or contact me on the number on this newsletter.

Enjoy this month's activities.

Best wishes

Margaret

Chair, The Deepings u3a

GROUP COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Our Group Leaders' Meeting was well attended and a great forum to share advice and thoughts. It was an opportunity for us all to voice ideas on how to promote new groups, grow our membership, and sustain current groups. Thank you to everyone for such a lively and helpful afternoon, with much for the Committee to absorb! Group Leaders have been emailed with the minutes, with a report on decisions from the Group Leaders' Meeting to be published in the May Newsletter.

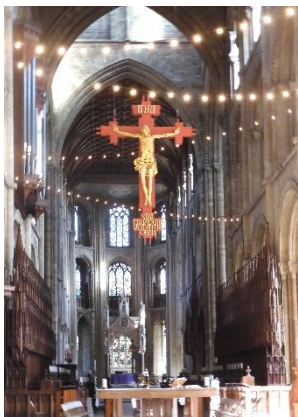
In other news, policies and documents are being reviewed and updated. The thirteen venues that U3A use or

can use is also in the process of being updated to reflect any changes, especially the cost of room hire. Elton Hall is hosting a series of private visits to the garden, Hall, or both. Spaces available in July, but earlier dates possible. I have emailed the gardening groups, but if there is wider interest, please email me for further details - groups@deepingsu3a.com.

Finally, one member wonders if anyone would like to join her in a new Walking Group, but not a Wednesday or Friday, about 3K - 4K max distance. Again, let me know.

Tom Baldwin Group Coordinator

CHURCH MICE



Fifteen members of Church Mice visited Peterborough Cathedral on a warm March Day. Only 15 as u3a had a Group Leaders' Meeting on the same afternoon. Who knew Church Mice had so many group leaders!

We made up for our missing members by using one of our group to be the guide. As Avril had used the cathedral as the basis for her doctorate we could have found no-one better. Mixing facts with witty anecdotes Avril led us through the cathedral showing us what some of us already knew. But also showing us what probably the other guides didn't know. We followed up the visit by going to the nearby Argo Lounge for refreshments.

Report and Group Leader: Henry Roberts

LISTENING TO MUJSIC GROUP

March report

Our March meeting took place at Simon Leyton's house. Simon's programme titled "Great Artists" featured a number of famous musicians with whom he has been associated with during his life.

We started with an early recording by Kathleen Ferrier with her and unique voice singing *What is life to me without thee* from Gounod's *Orfeo and Euridice*. This was followed by the relatively unknown Chinese mezzo-Chinese mezzo-soprano Guang Yang, winner of the 1997 BBC Cardiff Singer of the Year competition, with a wonderful performance of *Der Tod and das Madchen*. Mendelssohn's *O rest in the Lord* was sung by Janet Baker, her superbly iconic voice bringing breath-taking beauty to the music.

Moving on to Mozart we heard the third *Horn Concerto* brilliantly played by the legendary Denis Brain followed by Faure's *Elegy* played by cellist Jaqueline du Pré with her equally famous husband pianist Daniel Barenboim.

The heart-breaking lyrics and brief Schubert *Der Leiermann* from the *Winterreise song cycle* was performed by the long-lamented Fischer-Diskau.

Memorable performances were also heard from the late pianist Alfred Brendal, recorder player Michela Petri and bassoonist Klaus Thunemann.

The morning ended with the meditation *Kol Nidrei* by Bruch played by the cellist Matt Haimovitz.

Throughout the morning, Simon provided an informative background to each piece heightening our listening at 10:00 AM on 8th April. Venue tba. experience.

Thank you, Simon, for hosting such an interesting morning. Our next meeting will be at 10am on 8th April – venue TBA.

April report

A well-known quote from the Monty Python series was "and now for something completely different". This certainly was certainly the case for our April meeting held at Colin Walls' house.

In a departure from our normal meeting format, Colin called his presentation "How well do you know your Violin Concertos." This consisted of Colin playing an extract from a violin concerto and then asking us to identify the piece. In all, we heard excerpts from 30 concertos.

Some of the pieces were from standard repertoire and, as a violinist myself, found them not too difficult to identify. These included the Sibelius, Beethoven, Brahms and Mendelssohn concertos among others. More challenging were those by Elgar, Dvořák and Paganini. Those of a more perplexing nature were concertos by Alma Deutscher (written when she was aged nine!), *Butterfly Lovers* (written by two Chinese He Zhanhao and Chen Gang), Wieniawsky and Winton Marsalis – they all certainly kept us guessing. It was a wide-ranging selection of performances and styles played throughout the morning. Thank you, Colin for hosting such an interesting, thought provoking and informative morning. Our next meeting will be at 10 am on 13th April. Venue at Chris Hartley's house.

Reports by Terry Noble, Group Leader

CRAFT GROUP



Thanks to Maureen Gumbrell for not only hosting the March meeting but showing us a new skill.

We started Christmas early this year with making air dry clay tree decorations!

We were slightly reduced in number due to illness, but as requested we turned up in "old clothes" complete with apron, rolling pin and tile as board. Maureen was right, it was messy but very satisfying to get it right! Well so far anyway and fingers crossed they don't crack whilst air drying.

Looking forward to painting and decorating in our April meeting.

The April meeting date will be two days later, Wednesday 22nd April at 2pm Maureen's house. See you all then.

**Report Liz Noble
Group Leader Pam Ready**

CYCLING GROUP



It was ideal cycling weather on Thursday 9th April, not too hot and minimal wind. On this occasion it was a case of quality not quantity as only two of us set out for our monthly ride.

It was rather an impromptu route as we basically made it up as we rode. Proceeding along Suttons Lane and on towards Peakirk, we took a right turning to skirt Glington and then through the tunnels under the A15 and on to Etton. Here we took the opportunity to go in to St Stephen's Church (see photo). This is one of those places often passed by but never visited.

Then it was on to Helpston returning via Maxey to stop at The Boundary Fish Restaurant – a total distance of 12½ miles

Our next outing is on Thursday 14th May leaving the bridge at Market Deeping at 10.30 am.

**Report by Terry Noble
Group Leader: Jim Torrance**

NATURAL HISTORY GROUP



Nature watching isn't always serious. We do have some fun moments in our group, particularly on our last meeting to Paxton Pits Nature Reserve near St Neots.

One of our group spotted an owl sitting in the meadow so we focussed our binoculars in order to identify it. It was quite distant and very still so we waited for it to move. Then someone got their telescope trained on it. At last, it could be identified as a clod of earth! So, in addition to hearing the wonderful spring sounds of the chiffchaff and Cetti's warbler, we enjoyed the sound of our laughter. Our photo shows us enjoying a coffee and chat in the Visitor Centre after our walk.

Report and Group Leader: Beverley Tegala

PACERS GROUP March report



Thirteen of us set out from the pretty village of Pickworth for our March walk. Eddie, our co-opted member from the Thursday group had kindly offered to lead the walk and we were joined by two new members Nick Nickerson and Barbara Holmes.

The morning was cloudy and a bit chilly but the forecast promised a clear day to follow. We all parked on the wide grass verge at the cross roads in the centre of this tiny village and were about to set off when we were confronted by an angry villager who told us, in no uncertain terms, that we had parked on private land and would need to move our cars! The land was, he claimed, owned and maintained by the residents of the very nice properties on the opposite side of the road. Although there were no signs to that effect, we decided it wasn't

worth the hassle and moved the cars some 150 yds from our starting point!

So slightly later than anticipated we set off on a 4-mile circular walk which took in beautiful rolling hills, farmland and the edge of woodland. A perfect walk for this time of year, not too muddy and mostly firm underfoot. And although the sun never really got through it did warm up, there was the odd patch of blue sky and definite signs of spring.

Lunch had been pre-ordered at Stamford Garden Centre in Great Casterton, was served promptly and was generally agreed to be delicious.

Report by Marje Armstrong

April report

The cold north wind that had been with us for several days had gone leaving a very calm and pleasant day for the Pacers' April walk, starting from The Fox in North Luffenham. The group of eight, which included two new members, was led by Geoff Fitzjohn.



It was good to see lambs in the fields and the many signs of Spring emerging as we made our way to South Luffenham. We were intrigued by the signs to the Fieldview cake shack which turned out to be a couple of sentry box sheds side by side in someone's driveway with a selection of cakes inside.

On our way up to the village centre, we came across some friendly volunteers who were working on the village nature area. We have passed here on previous walks and seen the impressive progress that they are making.

We sat for a while on the round bench on the Green near the Church and enjoyed the calm of this lovely village. Some donkeys were grazing in the paddock opposite.

Passing over the river Chater for the second time we passed more Collyweston roofed houses and then onto the ridge footpath which presents fine views over the valley. New fences and hawthorn hedges have been introduced since our last visit.

Walking downhill on the road we passed over the railway bridge and almost immediately turned right on to the field footpath which takes you up the hill to North Luffenham church. Crossing the Chater over the sturdy, new bridge we made our way up to the village passing the haha and pausing in the churchyard to respect the well-kept War Graves.

The staff at the Fox looked after us well from the initial booking to the excellent food served to us. This finished off a 3.5 mile walk that was new to several members of the group.

Next walk is on 6 May, details to be confirmed.

**Report. Geoff Fitzjohn.
Group Leader Margaret Beardsall**



STROLLERS



The March outing involved a late change to the programmed walk as part of the original route was virtually impassable, close to the bridge over the River Nene at Wansford. Despite that, we were able to improvise, but still taking in part of the original route. So, it was a return to Northamptonshire, starting at the picturesque village of Nassington. There were 12 of us who met at the Queens Head on an overcast day, with very light rain.

Walking towards the former Black Horse hostelry, Geoff, who hails from this village elaborated on the history of some of the local houses and former businesses, as we passed them. A lot were the subject of the village's impressive, recently introduced, 'blue plaque' scheme.

Leading up the main village street, as the light rain stopped, as we walked through the church yard of St. Mary the Virgin and All Saints., walking towards the stream, known as the Runnel, which we had to negotiate via a ford. Fortunately, there were bricks in the ford to facilitate the crossing, which all 12 of us passed with flying colours.

With no 'mishaps' crossing the ford, we then walked along a bridle way to the road leading to Yarwell. Taking the footpath, which is part of the Nene Way trail, we bypassed the main village street and came to Yarwell Mill.

At this attractive location, we enjoyed some refreshment courtesy of the on-site café, and enjoyed a rest and a chat, taking in the ambience of the scene, before continuing the circular route back to Nassington.

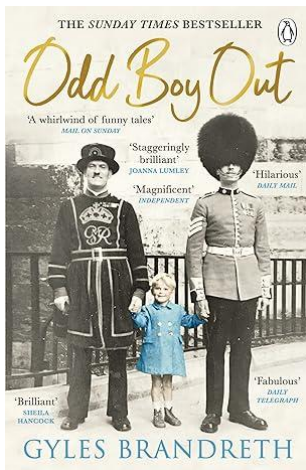
The photograph shows the lock to the quay at Yarwell Mill.

Stuart will be leading our April walk, which will be based on Thurlby on Friday 24th, meeting at The Horseshoe.

Report and Group Leader: Bob Deller

MONDAY READERS

March report



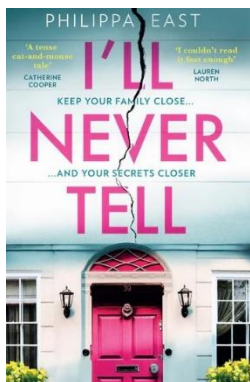
Our book this month produced an unusual amount of agreement among our group – but, sadly, it was for the wrong reasons! We had read (or not read) *Odd Boy Out* by Gyles Brandreth which two of our members had chosen, partly because we seldom read autobiography, but mainly because Gyles Brandreth is a popular personality. It seemed that his life story might be entertaining and witty.

Our general feeling was, however, that this was a disappointment. Some of us gave up entirely but all of us felt it was self-obsessed, name dropping, too wordy, turgid, and smug. The anecdotes were sometimes interesting, but we felt doubt as to his apparently photographic recall of what he ate, who said what to him, and (far too often) what he said to whom.

One to avoid we thought – unless you are as interested in Gyles Brandreth as Gyles Brandreth is!

Report by Liz Waterland

April report



With the Easter break leading to family commitments, holidays and other clashing events, we were a select group of readers this month.

Our book was *I'll Never Tell*, a psychological thriller by Philippa East who is a Lincolnshire author. It tells the story of young violinist Chrissie who goes missing immediately after she is successful in a prestigious music competition. What has happened to her and the secrets all those involved 'never tell' is the backbone of the story.

We found the book held very unpleasant characters who frequently behave in unattractive ways. Few felt it was a book we thoroughly enjoyed and while we thought it made for good discussion, we wouldn't necessarily recommend it to a friend!

The group would like to extend their huge congratulations to Group Leader Liz Waterland on receiving the Queen's Reading Room medal from Queen Camilla for her outstanding services to literature in the county.

Report: Linda Hill
Group Leader: Liz Waterland

THURSDAY WALKING GROUP

March report



In March 12 walkers met at the Cross Keys Inn in Kings Cliffe. It was a dry, overcast morning with a forecast for high velocity winds. And, it was quite windy throughout but at least we had no rain.

We began by heading along West Street through the centre of this charming ancient village. Many of the buildings are furnished with blue plaques revealing who lived there and what the building was used for at that time.

At the end of the village, we turned northwards up Wood Lane— a hill, and at the top we turned left to enter Fineshade Wood. The woods are managed by Forestry England and are part of the former royal hunting forest of Rockingham Forest.

The woods feature waymarked walks, a visitors' centre at Top Lodge, and are rich in wildlife, with over 2400 species recorded.

Heading anti-clockwise, we walked along the cycle path taking us through the woods. After passing a few thousand trees we emerged at the visitors' centre, where there is a café and a cycle hire.

Continuing anticlockwise, we came back to the point where we first entered the woods – this was the only muddy part of the entire walk. We saw very little of the wildlife but we did find a very expensive looking walking boot that someone had discarded due to it being damaged – I wonder if they hopped the rest of their journey.

Retracing our steps back along Wood Lane, now downhill, we headed back through the village to the pub where we enjoyed a hearty meal in this ancient inn.

Distance walked 6-5 miles

Many thanks to Claire and Simon Bysse for organising and leading this very pleasant day out.



April report



Only eight members this month met on a fine morning at the Horse & Jockey, in Manton.

Leaving the pub, we headed up St. Mary's Road then turned right onto Lyndon Road. At the end, we carefully crossed the A6003 and continued into the fields where the deserted medieval village of Martinthorpe once stood.

After a short while we turned south, downhill, to cross the River Chater by means of a very small ancient stone bridge. Crossing a few more fields we now had to head uphill, through a damp meadow, then emerged onto Oakham Road, just before the village of Preston. From here, looking backwards we had a panoramic view

of our walk so far. We observed a vista of brown fields, green meadows and the beginnings of fields of yellow rape seed.

We now headed east along the quiet Preston Road. This eventually took us south, downhill, crossing over above the railway lines. A little further on we turned north to head back, crossing over the railtrack once more.

Uphill again, we trudged to emerge at the village of Wing. Here we crossed Top Street, then headed down Middle Street, then turned left onto Bottom Street. From here, heading downhill, north-west, across damp meadows, we came to the large railway bridge at Manton Junction. After passing under the bridge we walked alongside the railtrack, due north, uphill again, past Broccoli Bottom to emerge onto Lyndon Road.

A short hop from here landed us back at the pub where we had a very enjoyable lunch. Distance walked 5.75 miles.

Thank you to David and Godfrey for organising and leading a very enjoyable up and down walk.

Reports by Group Leader: Richard Coulson

JAZZ, SWING AND BIG BAND GROUP

Our March session was compiled of some great names in music inspired by Anne Jones. Most people will recall with some affection, the Northern Dance Orchestra, known to radio listeners as the NDO. Formed in 1956 the band endured several changes to finally end in 1986 as the BBC closed many of its in-house orchestra. With tunes such as *Too Close for Comfort* and *My Boy Lollipop* the band's versatility and downright excellence shone through.

While the rest of the programme for the day contained a nostalgic thread, the performances by the RAF Swing Wing, a 17-piece big band (*When You're Smiling* and *Sun Valley Jump*) proved that groups of younger musicians know that you can't keep a good tune down. There is even a RAF Music jazz Trio, made up of two Senior Aircraftwomen, on bassoon and string bass, with a Senior Aircraftsman on vibraphone. A great combination.

Our session included work by Cleo Laine and husband Johnny Dankworth, Pete Fountain (clarinettist) and the man who became something of an institution in and out of music by his chairmanship of *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue* but his fame as a jazzman was to the fore. One of our number recalls being at a concert and taking part where Humph and his band played *The Onions*. At various points in the music there was a pause and the custom was for the audience to shout "onions".

Anne's inspiration provided some excellent entertainment in a very listenable set of jazz works. The morning continues with a New Orleans street performance by a band called Tuba Skinny playing *Maple Leaf Rag*, which could be said to be well worn, but this was a cracking performance. For over a decade Tuba Skinny has been touring all over the world. They've attracted a wide variety of fans – young and old. They've become known as world-class interpreters of traditional jazz, and over the years have branched out into jug band music, spirituals, country blues, string band music, ragtime, and New Orleans R&B. Their approach is a true reflection of Americana, encompassing the full genealogy of popular American music from an early 20th Century perspective.

The lady who completed our morning was Gunild Carling, with her big band or in a small group. She is a very competent multi-instrumentalist and the first piece, *Blue Berry Hill*, where her energetic trombone playing proved the point and encouraged further investigation for future appreciation. Ending with a typical New Orleans tune, *Just A Close Walk With Thee*, dare I say as played in funeral procession through the streets, ended with the customary rousing trad finish.

Thanks to Anne Jones for her inspiration. Our next meeting at the home of Phil Jones, will be a session of music put together by Geoff Whittle, on 22 April 2026.

Report by Phil Jones
Group Leaders: Phil Jones, Anne Jones

ART APPRECIATION GROUP



Today's talk was given by John Dewis and was all about Equine Art in the 18th Century. He began by showing photographs of caves in France and Derbyshire that had primitive paintings of horses and hunting scenes. He showed Roman mosaics and then the Bayeux Tapestry both portraying horses but one in marble tiles and the other as a stitched masterpiece.

We concentrated on The Three S's Seymour, Sartorius and Stubbs. Painting above is by Seymour. We weren't sure about the hounds! They look a bit odd!

James Seymour was the first serious sporting artist of the time and his paintings of horses were renowned. However his love of gambling, high living and women led to him becoming a 'starving artist', who died in debt and poverty aged around 50 years of age. He died in Southwark in June 1752.

Sartorius



Francis Sartorius was born in 1734 and is recognised as one of the founding fathers of British and equestrian and sporting art. His work often featured cropped ears (on the horses!) and was painted in the naïve style associated with 18th century equestrian art work. Sartorius is best known for his horse portraits, which were commissioned by the Duke of Cumberland and Lord Rockingham. He exhibited regularly at the Free Society from 1773 to 1783, the Royal Society of Artists from 1778 to 1791 and at the Royal Academy from 1775 to 1790. Sartorius's obituary in *The Sporting Magazine* in 1804 noted that he was married and cohabited with five successive wives. He died in 1804 leaving behind a son, John Nost Sartorius, who also

became an eminent painter. The painting is one by Sartorius.

George Stubbs (1724-1806)



George Stubbs was a famous painter. He is best known for his amazing paintings of horses. George Stubbs taught himself how to paint. He didn't learn from other famous artists of the time like Reynolds or Gainsborough.

He painted many different things, including historical scenes. But he was a truly great painter of animals. This was probably because he loved studying their bodies. His series of paintings showing a lion attacking are important early examples of the Romantic Period. His famous painting *Whistlejacket* can be seen at the National Gallery in London.

It was relaxing morning and was well supported. Thank you to everyone who came.

Next month we have as our speaker, Alan Brooke who is talking about Tirzah Garwood.

Report by Group Leader: Sandra Jones

GOOD FOOD GROUP

Mexican March Meeting [Eating]

March's theme was 'Mexican Food' and this proved to be a popular and tasty choice.

First up were some tasty appetisers: nachos, guacamole and salsa dips, with blackcurrant liqueur fizz.

And then there were grilled tortillas wrapped round cream cheese, spring onions and coriander. Also, there were wraps with cheese and olives.

The main event was smoky Mexican meatball stew accompanied by patatas bravas and an avocado and tomato salad followed by enchiladas with spicy beef, shredded lettuce, salsa and grated cheese.

For those who could manage it there was a dessert of tres leche—as the name suggests a cake made from three different milks—surprisingly tasty!

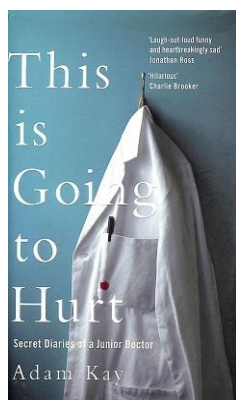
And then, coffee and a lie down!

Next meeting in April will be Delia's recipes—new members always welcome. Team leaders, Shiela McGurk: mcgurkshiela@gmail.com and Hilary Akam: hilaryakam88@gmail.com

Report: Sheila McGurk

Group Leaders: Hilary Aken and Sheila McGurk

BOOKWORMS



'This Is Going To Hurt' by Adam Kay. The book began life as a series of reflections while Kay was an NHS doctor between 2004-2010. Resigning through stress and possible PTSD, and removed after five years from the Medical Register, Kay revisited his 'reflections' and presents them as diary extracts, published in 2017. Kay presents an unflinching portrait of the realities of hospital life, combining great humour with high seriousness as he progresses from House Doctor to Senior Registrar. Adam's diary recounts the absurdity of patents and NHS bureaucracy, his tone often overlaid with dark, cynical humour. A favourite moment – there is an announcement that Michael Jackson (the famous singer) has died. 'Oh God, which cubicle?' cries a nurse. But the humour hides a serious purpose: the daily unremitting stress of long hours and their devastating effect on social and personal relationships.

Mixed reactions from Bookworms. Some loved the book, while others found its treatment of patients insensitive. There was huge sympathy for Adam's almost impossible workload with scant emotional support. But some argued, given its sensitive nature (Ob-Gyn), that the humour was often gratuitously crude. However, the book achieved its purpose, exposing an overworked but underfunded junior doctor workforce. It won several awards and today Adam Kay is a very successful scriptwriter and children's author. A must read before you visit the doctor

Report and Group Leader: Tom Baldwin

THURSDAY GARDENING GROUP



This month's meeting was definitely quality but sadly not quantity of us able to go to Springfields because of usual clashes with appointments etc.

Sadly, I was one of the absentees so I am writing this from hearsay and several of David Scott's lovely photos!



All one could say about the weather was that it was dry!

However, as a result of the rain/wind/cold even the early expected tulips needed a bit more warmth before flowering.

The daffodils and the interesting “trial beds” were still in spectacular colour.

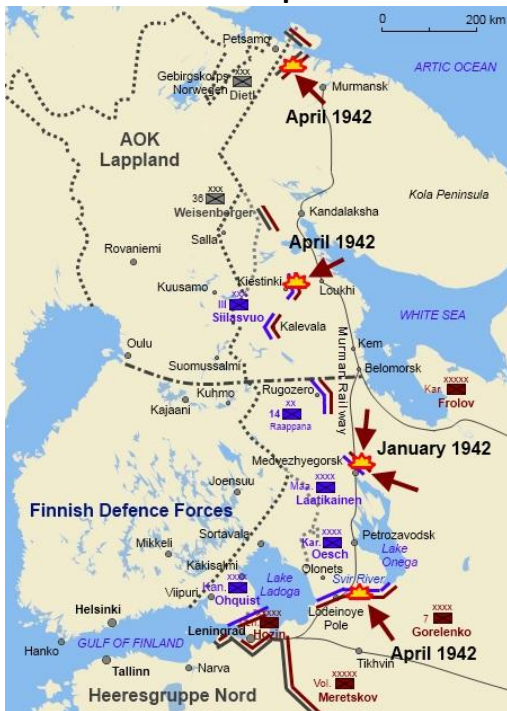


The May meeting will be at Gill Ronaldson’s house, which we look forward to as it is sometime since we managed a visit there and surely it will have warmed up a bit by then!

Report Liz Noble
Group leaders Kay Parker and Ann Pettitt

HISTORY GROUP

Continuation War - Speaker Brian Thornthwaite



It was a beautiful spring morning when Brian took us back to the years before the Continuation War and the events that led up to it. The Continuation War is seen as a conflict taking place between 1941 and 1944. It was mainly between Finland and Russia. It was a fascinating look at the past but it had sinister comparisons with what is happening today and wars breaking out in various parts of the globe. It was difficult to imagine the tactical agreements being made between countries. Weapons being sold by one country to another only to find they were then being used to attack the country that had supplied the weapons in the first place! It sounded like a macabre playground but then war is often described as a Theatre! Huge numbers of lives were lost, massive starvation was endured by innocent people of all nationalities and at the same time the rest of the world was at war with Germany! Do we ever learn from past mistakes? I think the answer must be a resounding NO! Thank you, Brian for a thought-provoking talk. Thank you to everyone who helped.

Report by Sandra Jones
Group Leader: Sandra Jones

**COMMITTEE
MEMBERS 2025/26**

Chair	Margaret Beardshaw
Secretary	Mary Martin
reasurer	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**

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