



Issue No.297

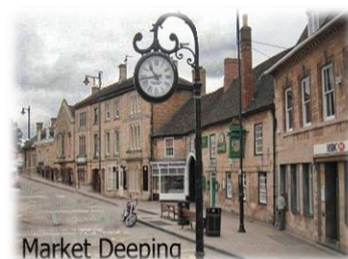
June 2026

The Deepings u3a **NEWSLETTER**

Website: deepings.u3asite.uk

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[Deepings website](http://deepings.u3asite.uk)



Welcome

New members in May: Pam Toy, Deeping St James

NEXT MEETING: 15 June

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

PROGRAMME OF SPEAKERS FOR 2026:

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.

20 July 2026: William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement

Don Chiswell will tell us about the English textile designer and artist, William Morris

AUGUST: NO MEETING

September: Gordon Bennet

John Dewis will explain about the extraordinary life of Gordon Bennet and his pursuit of fame and fortune.

MARGARET'S MUSINGS

Dear members

We are in the season of exams (I am marking!) and many of us will be supporting young family members in the midst of the marathon.

As u3a members we can relax in the knowledge that our learning is for pleasure. There are many and varied "subjects" in our timetable, each with an inspiring "syllabus". There is always room to expand so please get in touch with Tom, Group Coordinator, with your ideas.

U3a committee roles are, according to the constitution, limited time wise. The Chair should be in post for a maximum of five years. For me, this will be up in October this year. So if you want to come forward or nominate a member, please get in touch.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the monthly meeting.

Best wishes

Margaret

Margaret Beardshaw

Chair

RECRUITMENT OF NEW MEMBERS

At our recent meeting with Group Leaders, two important issues emerged. First, that modern society is changing at pace, leaving some in our community feeling isolated.

Second, how Deepings u3a can respond and adapt to these rapidly changing times.

Our response? Mobilise our organisation to target, encourage and persuade as many in our community as possible to share in and contribute to what we offer.

We hope to achieve this with a two-pronged strategy. First, target non-members through our usual channels, but with an emphasis on early retirees, those choosing part-time work or moving into the area.

Second – and this is where we can all help! - to spread the word to non-member friends and colleagues.

A few reminders of the benefits of joining: Deepings u3a would love to hear from you if you have a hobby, interest or skill you would like to share with others. You may wish to join an existing group, or start your own. Help and support is provided.

At Deeping u3a, members share their skills and knowledge to participate in over 30 different interest groups. The groups range from arts and crafts to physical activities and languages.

The emphasis is on socializing and enjoyment. And you might just learn as well!

There are no upper or lower age limits – only that you are not in full time employment and are retired, or semi-retired. There are no academic requirements.

If you know anyone who could benefit from joining u3a or has skills that may be of interest, then please talk or share this part of the Newsletter with them.

Alternatively, for more support and information, email: groups@deepingsu3a.com

GROUP CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT4

A thank-you to those who got in touch last month. Our new system for welcoming new members is working well, keeping the group coordinator – that's me! - in the loop. David Perkins sends me a note at the end of each month listing new members and contact number, allowing me to email a welcome note and find out if anyone needs help - for example, finding a group to join.

A reminder from last month. At the rear of the hall, by the boards advertising our groups, you will find a clipboard providing an opportunity to write comments, suggestions, problems, ways that can improve our efficiency. There is also a separate card if you need help in finding or making contact with a group you may wish to join. I will collect these at the end of each meeting and respond.

This month and throughout the summer we are hoping to recruit more members and create new interest groups. This is a two-pronged attack! Advertising can be effective, but nothing beats word of mouth! Do spread the word to relatives, friends, colleagues – even those you don't particularly get on with! Encourage them to attend a monthly meeting, perhaps join an interest group or start one.

Finally, this month, we continue to update our Policies and Guidelines. All should be completed by next month, then uploaded to the website. For those who find Policies, Guidelines and Accident Forms difficult to read on iPhones, we are discussing ways to make access easier for all. Perhaps an opportunity to suggest how to do this on the suggestion sheet at the rear of the hall next meeting!

Tom Baldwin, Group Coordinator

SCIENCE GROUP

We had a very interesting talk from Garth about forever chemicals. It was the latest instalment of his "we are all doomed" series.

As the name suggests these chemicals once manufactured are incredibly difficult to get rid of. The worrying thing is that they are in virtually everything - air, water, soil, food packaging, carpets, clothes etc.

They end up in the sea and then progress up the food chain becoming more concentrated. They are linked to some health problems. There is not much that the average person can do about it.

On a more positive note, the chocolate biscuits were good!

**Report by Gill Godden
Group Leader: Garth Perry**

SUNDAY LUNCH GROUP



The next lunch meeting will be at the Deeping Stage on 28th June, at 12.30 for pm.

We have to pre-order, so I will send the menu nearer the time.

The photo shows us enjoying lunch at the Black Horse, Baston.

Group Leaders: Helen Perkins and Enid Withers

MONDAY WALKING GROUP



Twelve walkers met at the Robin Hood & Little John, Aslackby and ordered our food before setting off for the walk.

We were geared up for wet weather as per the forecast. Needless to say it didn't rain and was a mixture of cloud and sun. Monday walks tend not to do rain!!!

Crossing over the A15, we walked through Aslackby via the church to the west side to connect up with the footpath going North.

Coming to Langton, we crossed over more footpaths heading to Folkingham. Greenfield Lane took us to more footpaths, tracks and narrow road back to Langton.

Here we returned to Aslackby and the pub using the same outbound route.

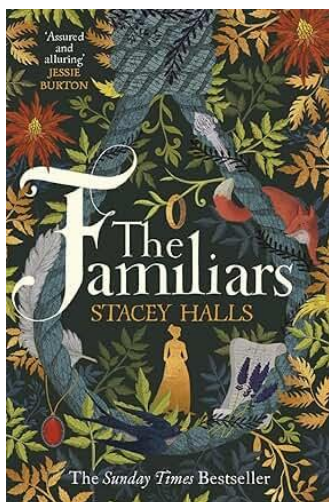
Heading too far towards Folkingham had increased the walk by a mile (a typical Steve (me) addition). So, the walk distance was, as usual, different lengths – between 6.59-7.04 miles!!!

A great lunch was had by all, several had the Steak and Ale pie which was excellent, probably the best one I've had. One of the group enjoys chips so he ended up with about five dishes surrounding him.

Report by Steve Hanson
Group Leader: Steve Hanson

BOOKWORMS

May report



'The Familiars' by Stacey Halls. The novel is set in 1612, the year of the infamous Lancashire Pendle Witch Trials, where ten women were found guilty of witchcraft and hanged.

Against this background is the story of Fleetwood Shuttleworth, a wealthy, seventeen-year-old wife. Married at thirteen, Fleetwood suffered three miscarriages and is again pregnant, hoping to produce a male heir to preserve the family fortune. Weak and ill, she learns through a doctor's letter that another pregnancy might be life-threatening. She meets and rapidly befriends a young midwife named Alice Gray, under whose care Fleetwood regains her health. But when Alice is accused of witchcraft, defying all convention, Fleetwood races to save her friend.

Most Bookworms enjoyed this Historical Fiction novel. Historical, because almost all the named characters and the events connected to the Pendle Witch Trials are real. Fiction, because although Fleetwood and Alice are both mentioned in contemporary documents, their meeting and friendship is imagined. (Contemporary records show that Alice was found not guilty at the witch trials). Some members thought the early plotting slightly weak; a slow

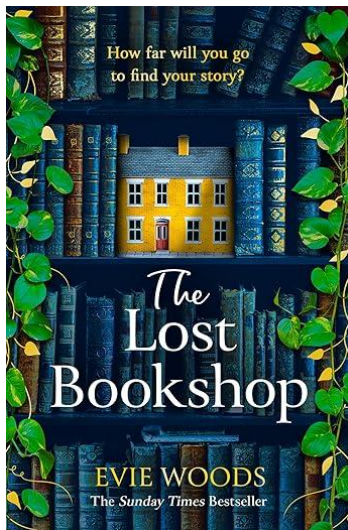
starter which picked up pace later; an ending which left some characters and issues unresolved. But most enjoyed the strong female lead seeking justice in a world powered by men, set in a period of huge political, religious and social turmoil. An atmospheric novel to enjoy – especially if you like witchcraft!

June report

'The Lost Bookshop' by Evie Woods. The plot alternates between Opaline's story (1920s) and Martha and Henry's stories (both set in the present). Opaline flees from London and an arranged marriage. Her lifelong passion for reading and books is finally realised when she opens her own bookshop. But, traced by her cruel brother, he consigns Opaline to a Dublin asylum, where she gives birth to a daughter. Martha – like Opaline 80 years earlier – escapes an abusive relationship and becomes housekeeper to the enigmatic Mrs Bowden. Henry, an awkward academic, is obsessively hunting for a lost manuscript. His search leads him to a bookshop which he enters - but later it disappears! Henry realises the bookshop is next to Martha and Mrs Bowden's house. Together, Martha and Henry unravel Opaline's history, her lost daughter, and how both stories are interconnected and united by the lost bookshop.

Mixed reactions from Bookworms to this one! Some found the magical realism not always logical – many could accept magical elements in novels, but they have to grow organically from events, not just added without explanation. Also, some found the romantic subplot didn't sit well with the more serious themes –

marketed as a 'cosy' story, it raised issues that were not cosy! But praise too. Well written; excellent pace; themes of healing and self-discovery powerfully portrayed. Above all, this is a book about books. Their ability to change lives, bring people together (as Henry and Martha understand the importance of their stories) and unlock the imagination. That's the real magic!



Reports by Group Leader: Tom Baldwin

WEDNESDAY GARDENING GROUP



Leanda, one of our members, and her husband Chris kindly hosted us for our May meeting. Nine members arrived with the weather looking very unsettled but fortunately we were able to walk around the garden before a large downpour forced us inside.

Leanda has a beautifully kept and very interesting garden with a variety of plants, shape and colour, and she was able to identify and give us information about these. As the garden lies against the field path, the use of lots of different shrubs makes a good wind barrier. Various seating areas were tucked in to catch the sun.

When the heavens opened we all rushed inside for our coffee and cake. Thank you Leanda for a lovely morning.

**Report. Julie Fitzjohn
Group Leaders. Jean Foster Julie Fitzjohn**

THURSDAY WALKING GROUP



For our May walk, eleven walkers met outside the Raymond May Wetherspoons public house, in Bourne. It was a fine, cool, overcast day with threats of rain and hail.

We set off down North Street and at the roundabout turned right onto Harrington Street, heading due east. After a short while we left the surrounding buildings and turned north alongside the Carr Dyke. We came across an information board describing the Len Pick Trust Owl Project. It stated that local technical colleges and local farmers had built two owl towers to provide nesting sites.

After passing through two fields, with very inquisitive horses, we arrived onto Main Road, Dyke. Turning left and heading

west we came to a windmill besides the Wishing Well pub. Our leader, Ann, informed us that it was originally built around 1650 and was first used for powering water pumps in nearby Deeping Fen. At the end of the road, we carefully crossed the A15 and entered into Bourne Woods.

We now headed south, through the woods, along a limestone path exiting at Blind Well (superstitions say that a visit to Blind Well would cure a person who had lost their sight – hah hah, we shall see).

Heading now south east we meandered, besides Blind Well Stream, down snickets (passageways between walls and fences) and eventually emerged at our destination.

We had an inexpensive lunch at the Wetherspoons with the majority of walkers opting for the curry.

The threatened rain kept away, hardly any mud and the walk was just shy of six miles.

Many thanks to Ann Ashby for a very pleasant morning's walk. This is the first time Ann has arranged a walk for the group and we were all highly delighted with her skills and the interesting information given, throughout. We will now welcome you to offer your services on a regular basis, Ann.

Report by Richard Coulson, Walk Leader



THURSDAY GARDENING GROUP

May report



This month's meeting was visiting Gill Ronaldson's lovely leafy garden, somewhere we have been unable to visit for some time. It was great that we could almost all attend (Roy and Ann were away) and particularly good to see Mike and Sandy too.



Gill always says, don't look at all the weeds, but we are always in awe of the gorgeous trees and shrubs that make is an interesting walk through and beautifully private garden. Thank you Gill for hosting it and to David for the photos as always. June meeting is at the Margaret and David Scotts garden and hopefully the sun will shine too.

June report



We met at Margaret and David Scott's this month with a definite change in the weather – it rained as predicted, (welcome for the garden) but only whilst we had coffee and then we were able to stroll round the interesting very varied garden, so full of colour. Roses and clematis were doing particularly well and



the bees were loving the salvias.

We also managed to plan the annual summer lunch for July and looking forward to it with fingers crossed summer weather arrives! Thank you to Margaret and David for hosting the meeting.



Reports Liz Noble

Group leaders Kay Parker and Ann Pettit

PACERS GROUP

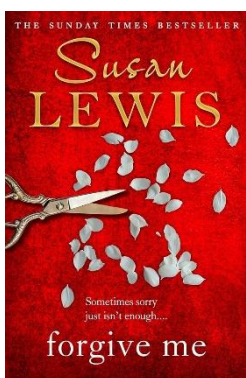


You can see from the photo that the weather wasn't kind to us for our June walk! The morning started bright & sunny and despite the appalling weather forecast 12 intrepid members set off from Ufford towards Bainton. They cut across the fields and woods to Barnack by which time it had started to drizzle! By the time I joined them for the last mile or so the heavens had opened and we were a very wet, dripping and slightly dejected group when we returned to the White Hart at Ufford. But our spirits were raised when we reflected on our achievement and resilience and wonderful lunch in the conservatory! The staff there always look us very well

Report by Marje Armstrong

Group Leaders: Geoff Whittle and Margaret Beardshaw

MONDAY READERS



Our book this month, *Forgive Me* by Susan Lewis, provoked a mixed reaction in our group. The story concerns Claudia, who with her family has changed her name and fled to a new town to escape her abusive husband, who is currently in jail on money laundering charges. Despite being locked up, her husband is able to call on associates to track her down and to employ a young delinquent lad to try to burn the family's new home down. After this, the story becomes one about the effect of the arson attack on the family and on the lad himself, which seems to divide the book into two parts, before and after the arson attack. Despite being described as being 'tense, emotional and gripping' our group tended to find this book as rather too pat in its plot with a very predictable progression and ending.

There were also wordy digressions

from the main plot, involving Claudia's interior design business, which most of us felt were unnecessary and detracted from any tension the author was trying to build up.

However, it did raise an interesting discussion about the process of restorative justice, which is a major theme in the book. Would we be willing to take part, if we had been the victim of a crime, and would we be able to forgive the perpetrator?

All in all, we felt this was a middling sort of book, easy to read with some interesting aspects to the otherwise fairly pedestrian plot.

Report by Liz Waterland, Group Leader

LISTENNING TO MUSIC GROUP

The 13th of May saw a complete gathering of all our ten members at Chris Hartley's house. Chris presented a programme based on Dance, ranging from the early 17th Century music of Henry Purcell, classical ballet through to the 20th Century Stravinsky, Rachmaninoff and Shostakovitch.

At the start of the meeting, Chris said he thought that we would know most of the items. Anyway, this proved not to be correct as most of us found something that was new. Also, the various moods of dance music were contrasted with the likes of *Ritual Fire Dance* and the *Sabre Dance* compared to Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*.

The tongue twisting chorus words of *In the Garden* from Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* provided a moment of amusement.

Altogether, it was a wide-ranging selection of music for dance and styles played throughout the morning.

Thank you Chris for hosting such an interesting and informative morning.

Our next meeting will be at 10 am on 10th June at Ann Holmes' house.

Report by Group Leader: Terry Noble

CRAFT GROUP



Back to normal day this month and at Pam's house. Sorry Maureen was unwell, but delighted to see Anita recovered who also produced the project consisting of complicated cutting but very colourful too. Thanks to both for hosting and project. Next month at Pam's on Monday 15 June.

**Report Liz Noble
Group Leader Pam Read**

POETRY GROUP

This month's meeting had "Time" as our topic, and we were treated to a wonderful variety of excellent poems.

To begin, we had *Bedtime* by Eleanor Farjeon and *Lunchtime* by William Robinson. This was followed by W. H. Auden, *But I Can't* and *Serenity Prayer* by Brian Bilston.

Next Brian Patten and *So Many Lengths of Time*. *Time* by Allen Curnow and *Meeting Point* by Louis MacNeice. A lovely poem by Mary Ursula Bethell called *TIME*.

Then, *Time You Old Gypsy Man* by Ralph Hodgson and *Leisure* by William Henry Davies. Then *WARNING* by Stevie Smith. We had a Pam Ayres poem called *Hello Long Distance, is That You?* Very funny a reminder of what it was like before mobile phones. The last two poems were *Something For Hope* by Robert Frost and *It Is Almost The Year Two Thousand* also by Robert Frost.

A enjoyable afternoon hosted by Susanne.

Late by Philip D.Rye

I'm always late, you know it's true
But is it such a crime?
Since, if you know I'm always late
Then actually I'm on time!

Report by Susanne Hoadley Group Leader.

NATURAL HISTORY GROUP



The Natural History Group visit this month was to Swaddywell Nature Reserve on the Stamford/Marholm Road. On arrival we were fortunate to meet the Warden, Chis Topper, who volunteered to take us round the site. Chris was able to point out the many interesting parts of the site and explain its history.

We saw Oak Eggar Moth caterpillars, Man Orchids (see photo), Common Spotted Orchids, a Bee Orchid, and a Dingy Skipper butterfly. Among other plants were Vetch, Herb Bennet and wild roses. Chris explained that the Saw edged Sedge was causing a huge problem and volunteers were trying to keep it under control. He explained the Tinwell-Marholm limestone/sand fault and pointed out the path where 150 different species of fly had been found!

A very interesting and instructional day followed by a cooling drink at Willowbrook Farm Cafe.

Report by Alistair Smith
Group Leader: Beverley Tegala

STROLLERS



Our walk this month was organised by Geoff and Julie Fitzjohn. We headed south on a clearly marked footpath which took us to the access gate for Castor Hanglands nature reserve. The paths are very good and after passing through woodlands, we entered the heath area where several ponds come into view. It was at this point that Hilary was able to identify several birdsongs by using her phone app., including the common nightingale, chiffchaff and Eurasian wren. We continued our walk over the heath with the temperature rising and frequent drink stops needed. After passing through a field of grazing sheep, we made our way back to the wooden gate where we entered the Hanglands (an old English word for a wood on a hill) and then returned to the café. This is a walk that can be varied in length to suit and three members had opted at the start for a shorter option rather than the full three miles.

The café looked after us well and served our meals promptly which finished off a pleasant walk on the first day of the heatwave. This was followed by a bit of retail therapy in the garden centre at Willow Brook!

Report by Geoff Fitzjohn
Group leader – Bob Deller

JAZZ, SWING AND BIG BAND GROUP

May's meeting of the Group was a real team effort. It was hosted by Ann (Holmes), compiled by Linda and presented by Phil.

The programme was comprised entirely of what might best be described as contemporary jazz, to avoid any negative – and perhaps restrictive – perception that "Modern Jazz" might elicit.

Continuing on from her presentation last year, Linda's programme comprised music by less well known, but in no way less important artists. To try and list all of them, together with the tunes that they played, in this short report would risk diminishing the importance of the whole which, perhaps, would be better illustrated by example and comparison.

The morning started with Grover Washington Jr, the American saxophonist considered by many to be one of the founders and legends of the smooth jazz genre, playing *Mercy, Mercy, Me*. The incestuous nature of the jazz community through the ages is well documented and was illustrated here when we heard, just a few minutes later, from George Benson, the American Jazz guitarist and singer-songwriter to whom Grover was well known.

Freddie Hubbard, hugely influential on the trumpet, played the enticing *Fragile*, before Astrid Gilberto was showcased with *Meditation*, a welcome contrast to her usual *Girl from Ipanema*. The contrast was heightened when, not long after, Café Brazil played *Girl* as an instrumental. Then Stan Getz, who first recorded the number with Astrid, enchanted with *O Granda Amor*.

The kaleidoscope, continued to turn, not the least with the John Cameron Quartet revealing the flute as a solo jazz instrument but, surprising as that was, it was not quite as surprising as Ann bringing the delightful session to the close by asking the group “What is Jazz” – of which more anon!

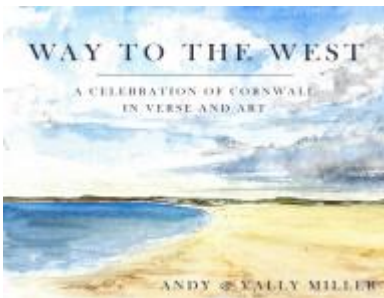
Our next meeting will be at the home of Colin on 25 June 2026

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

ART APPRECIATION GROUP



*Hail, humble Helpstone! where thy valleys spread,
And thy mean village lifts its lowly head;
Unknown to grandeur, and unknown to fame;
No minstrel boasting to advance thy name:
Unletter'd spot! unheard in poets' song;
Where bustling Labour drives the hours along;
Where dawning Genius never met the day;
Where useless Ignorance slumbers life away;
Unknown nor heeded, where, low Genius tries
Above the vulgar, and the vain, to rise.*



Today's guest speaker was Vally Miller who is not only Yvonne's sister but is also an accomplished artist. (She came to talk to us last year about her book entitled *Way To The West*.)

Yvonne and her family are descendants of John Clare 14 times removed. Vally found this information when doing her research for her new book which contains poems written by John Clare, which have been illustrated by her. She showed us some beautiful watercolour landscapes that she had painted.

Yvonne had been her chauffeur whilst the research was being gathered.

Paintings ranged from village scenes to churches and views of the Fens which

Clare found uninteresting.

Irene read out one of Clare's poems and it made a fitting end to a very interesting morning.

Thanks you to David for his expertise and to everyone who attended on a morning that was pretty dreary for May! Next month's speaker is Geoff who is talking about two marine artists from the late 19 th and early 20 th centuries He will bring examples of their work for the group to view Irene reading one of John Clare's poems.



Report by Group Leader: Sandra Jones

GOOD FOOD GROUP

Our June theme was picnic food. The weather was not kind to us. After all the sunny days we have had recently, we had an indoor picnic because it rained!

However, we enjoyed sausage rolls and quiche accompanied by dressed tomatoes and a summer salad including black beans, cucumber, avocado, mango and feta. This was followed by moreish chocolate and ginger flapjacks and strawberries dipped in chocolate.

New members welcome - no cooking skills needed. We pick a theme, google a recipe and follow the instructions! August's lunch is a BBQ.

Group Leaders Sheila McGurk and Hilary Akam

HISTORY GROUP

Old Scarlett - Speaker Stuart Orme



On May 20th the Green School was packed in anticipation for our speaker Stuart Orme. Stuart gave one of his excellent lectures about Robert Scarlett. Stuart elaborated on the story of Old Scarlett by giving a great deal of information about Tudor Peterborough. Old Scarlett, whose real name was Robert Scarlett, was born around 1496 and served as sexton and gravedigger at Peterborough Cathedral for decades. Living to the remarkable age of 98, he is said to have buried two queens – Katherine of Aragon in 1536 and Mary, Queen of Scots in 1587 – along with thousands of other townsfolk during his long

service. His duties would have placed him at the heart of many key events in the Cathedral's history, from the dissolution of the abbey to the turbulence of the Tudor court.

Scarlett's portrait still hangs above the Cathedral's west door, painted after his death in 1594. It shows him as a robust, bearded figure with spade and pickaxe in hand, accompanied by a rhyming verse honouring his extraordinary age and dedication. Over the centuries, Old Scarlett has become part of Peterborough's folklore – remembered not just for his longevity, but as a humble witness to some of the most momentous moments in the city's past.



"You see old Scarlitt's picture stand on hie,
But at your feete here doth his body lye.
His gravestone doth his age and Death time show,
His office by thes tokens you may know.
Second to none for strength and sturdye limm,
A Scarebabe mighty voice with visage grim.
Hee had interd two Queenes within this place
And this townes Householders in his lives space
Twice over: But at length his own time came;

What for others did for him the same

Was done: No doubt his soule doth live for aye

In heaven: Tho here his body clad in clay".

(This is the original verse and not one of ours with spelling mistakes!)

Next month we welcome John Dewis who is talking about the love life of one of the Stuart monarchs. It should be fun!

Thanks to everyone who helped today.

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

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.	David Scott
Webmaster	

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