

Hickling Broad u3a December 2024 Newsletter



Diary Dates: December 2024

Mon 02 Dec	Country Dancing
Tue 03 Dec	Croquet/Games
Wed 04 Dec	Walking
Wed 04 Dec	Bookworms
Thu 05 Dec	Creative Arts and Crafts
Thu 05 Dec	Blurr
Mon 09 Dec	Country Dancing
Tue 10 Dec	Croquet/Games
Thu 12 Dec	Crib
Fri 13 Dec	Members' Meeting
Mon 16 Dec	Blurr
Tue 17 Dec	Croquet/Games
Wed 18 Dec	Dining
Thu 19 Dec	Wildlife

Looking forward to seeing you all in 2025!



HBu3a Committee Monthly Update

At our next meeting at Hickling Barn (NR12 0YU) 2pm on Friday 13th December we will have our usual festive season celebratory meeting. Professional actor and all round musical entertainer Greg Powles will be presenting his Christmas Show for us. As usual, everyone is welcome. Hot spiced apple juice with a tot of rum if you wish will be served as well as our usual tea and coffee. Please bring some nibbles to share if you are able.

At our November meeting, Andrew Pettit, Hickling Project Manager from The Norfolk Wildlife Trust, came to give us an eagerly awaited update on the Trust's work developing, maintaining and protecting Hickling Broad and its wildlife. We heard about their sterling work refurbishing our local human watering hole, The Pleasure Boat Inn, since its recent purchase by the Trust. This was a unique opportunity to get a real insight into the Trusts' local work and progress so far. They are in the process of completing local consultations to support their future plans for the reserve, and Andrew has kindly promised to come back in April with full details of the Trusts' local hopes and plans for the future then.

As usual, our meeting ended with a sumptuous selection of home made cakes and a cup of tea or coffee. Thanks go as always to our ever generous cake bakers and stalwart tea team - we are always so grateful for your kindness and hard work.

Merry Christmas Everyone!

News from our Interest Groups

Group Contact Co-ordinator

Helen Foster:

Creative Arts and Crafts: 1st Thursday (2:00 – 4:00 pm)

Rose Pigula:

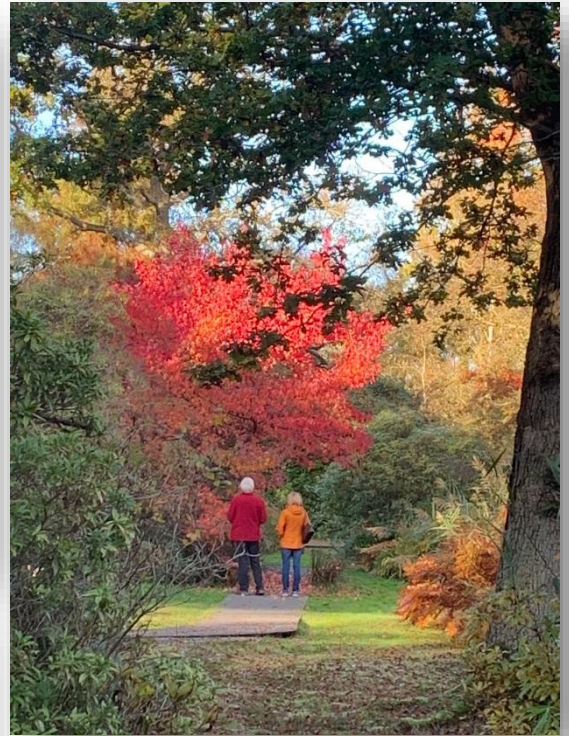
We are a small, friendly group who enjoy a range of different art and crafts. This month we will be making Christmas decorations. If you would like to join us just contact Rose on the above email.

BLURR – The Photography Group: 3rd Monday (2:00-4:00pm) at Hickling Barn

Contact: hicklingu3aphotos@gmail.com

Autumn colours paid dividends last month with a selection of photographs that reflected the rich reds and golden colours abundant in nature at this time of year. Despite the change being a little later than usual and lasting only a few days before high winds swept away our subject matter, the hardy Blurristas captured their scenes.

Next month the subject is 'Food'. Which ties in nicely with our Christmas social.



Bookworms – Reading Group: 1st Wednesday (2:00 – 4:00 pm) Hickling Barn

Kathy Cooper:

Bookworms meet up at Hickling Barn on the first Wednesday of the month 2-4pm. Members choose their own book from the list supplied by the library and the member who chooses the book to be discussed that month will lead the meeting.

The group met up on Wednesday, 6 November to discuss 'Case Histories' by Kate Atkinson which was Judy's choice and this is Judy's review:

Kate Atkinson is one of the world's foremost novelists. Her most recent novel, *Shrines of Gaiety*, set in the aftermath of the First World War, is a Sunday Times bestseller. She won the Whitbread Book of the Year prize with her first novel, *Behind the Scenes at the Museum*. Kate Atkinson was awarded an MBE in 2011 and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

A complex detective story which I found both moving and funny (at different times!). I certainly wanted to keep reading. It's set in Cambridge during a sweltering summer.

The first three chapters are really good, as Atkinson lays the groundwork to each of the three cases. A child goes missing from the tent in her garden where she is sleeping; a girl is murdered, seemingly as a result of being in the wrong place at the wrong time and a young mother is driven to her wits' end by her fractious baby. These three historical cases are suddenly all brought to the door of ex-police detective and current private investigator, Jackson Brodie, and he must try to find the explanations his clients are seeking while juggling his own messy private life.

I enjoyed the book although probably there wasn't too much detective work, I felt Jackson 'happened upon' clues sometimes and was probably too much of a coincidence to be realistic. However, I thought it was cleverly written and characters and places could be visualised. Would give it 8½ out of 10.

There is no Bookworms in December as the group will be having Xmas lunch at Wayford Bridge Inn. The group will be discussing Keith's choice in January, 'Dark Town' by Thomas Mullen. If you would like more information about Bookworms, please drop me an email.

British History

Steve Whitby:

Our November meeting saw Kaye present to the group on the "History of Manners".

Although no specific date marks the start of manners and etiquette, Kaye traced them through from the Greek and Roman periods through the Middle Ages to the present times. The Middle Ages particularly seem to have been misrepresented (chicken legs etc being thrown over shoulders at banquets etc.) but the reality was that their manners were not vastly different to those of today. We then discussed the reasons why certain examples of what is good manners came about (why do men walk on the outside of women?) and also considered how good manners are changing these days in the light of changing events such as the move from letter writing to texting and the rise of equality for women.

Since this was our last meeting of 2024 Shirley treated us to Christmas nibbles and mulled wine - thank you for feeding and watering us over the last year, Shirley.

We do not meet in December but will be back on 16th January 2025. We are currently putting together our programme for next year and details of the January and subsequent meetings will be available shortly

Crib: 2nd Thursday, Hickling Barn (2:00 – 4:00 pm)

Roy Smith:

Crib group meet on the second Thursday of the month at the Barn 2-4 pm. All welcome. Beginners welcome. Tuition given. Contact Roy



Voices of Hickling

Steve Whitby:

No meetings are currently planned.

Croquet/Games Group

Where has the time gone? We started the Croquet season in April and seven months later, we have reached the end. The group has continued to grow and flourish and there has been much enjoyment, not to mention a bit of competitiveness! At the same time, in the Barn, we had a small number of members playing games and we all met up for coffee, tea, biscuits and cakes at breaktime. For the winter season, we will all play cards and various other games in the Barn. If you would like to join us, please contact Keith or Diana

IT and Computer Learning

At our meeting this month we focused on emails, attachments and looked again at scams and online safety. We are working our way forward together to cover the different operating systems people use - it's a tricky task but hopefully we are making progress together!

We will not meet in December, so will reconvene at 12 noon on Monday 27th January to look at all things to do with our mobile Phones! Again - a busy and complex agenda, but we hope to learn from each other ways to get more out of them. Do come along if you want to know more. Please bring your fully charged phone with you and £1 to cover the Barn hire.

Dining Club: 3rd Wednesday (various locations)

Diana Fossett:



Our November venue was The Crown at Smallburgh, a 15th century coaching inn. Today, it's a popular local pub with accommodation available. The atmosphere was very welcoming and the fifteen of us went into a separate restaurant for our lunch. We had pre-booked but we had to wait while the meals were prepared. However, it did give us the opportunity to chat and catch up and watch the snow falling! When it did arrive, the home cooked food was enjoyed by all of us.

The next venue is The Filby Bridge on Wednesday, 18th December 12.45 for 1.00 p.m. For more information or if you would like to join us, please contact me -

Discovering the Broads/Norwich

Chris Foster:

"Hidden below Castle Meadow, between the market and the Norman Keep, you can discover the past of our fine city, with its trades, houses and people. Ponder the myths of eerie prison cells, hidden streets and curious tunnels. Come help us unlock the many mysteries of this space..." so read the advert for the Shoebox Medieval Tour - intrigued - we gave it go. It turned out to be a fascinating morning led by a very good guide and it was all smiles as we headed to Logans for a light lunch.



Gourmet Diggers: 4th Monday (2:00-4:00 pm) at Hickling Barn

Jane Brooker: Kate Fletcher:

It was the Christmas get together at Gourmet Diggers this month. I know you're saying "that's a bit early", but we don't meet up in December.

Everybody brought Christmas food which we all shared, it was yummy.

We started off with our Christmas quiz, questions on food and gardening, quite challenging.

Kate's game was difficult and tested out brain power, photos of parts of kitchen gadgets were shown to us and we had to say what they were. It's amazing what implements you can now buy to help you do the most mundane tasks in the preparation of your food.

We finished off with Molly's now famous game, passing wrapped gifts from right to left while Molly read out a story with lots of left and rights in it.

Great Christmas game, you should try it.

Kate and I wish everyone a Very Happy Christmas and a Wonderful New Year.



Wildlife Group: 3rd Thursday (10:00 am) Various locations

Chris Foster:

This month we visited East Ruston Poor Allotments for our annual fungi foray. It has not been a good year for fungi and the snow and rain the day before saw off most of the remnants of this year's harvest. It was however a sunny day and we had a very pleasant walk around a little known site. We then enjoyed a warming coffee at the Kingfisher in Walcott.



Walking: 1st Wednesday (usually 10:00 am)

Various locations

Roy Smith:

I'd like to say the day dawned sunny and bright for our walk over Halvergate marsh, but it didn't. It was grey, misty, and dank. However the party set off in good spirits. The route had been chosen as being particularly suitable for the time of year in that we would be on hard surfaces, tarmac or concrete, for the whole way.

Leaving the outskirts of Halvergate village, we went past Wickhampton church and out onto the marsh. The misty nature of the weather limited the longer views, but didn't detract from demonstrating the isolated, almost oppressive, and different feel to being on marshland compared to the farmlands that we usually walk around. However, the herd of bullocks that we came across seemed to be at home. Fortunately we were spared their boisterous behaviour by the ditch between our route and their field.

Circular walking routes across the marsh are limited in number, so we retreated back along the same path, with a detour along the lanes to return to our cars. Following the walk, a number of us adjourned to the Acle Bridge and enjoyed a convivial lunch.

Thanks go to Viv for researching the walk and guiding us.



Country Dancing: 1st and 2nd Mondays (2:00 – 4:00 pm) in Hickling Barn

Dinah Slatter:

On the evening of Saturday 16th November 15 members of the Country Dancing group alighted from their carriages and entered the ballroom of the Assembly Rooms in Norwich for the Playford Ball. The dancing commenced at 7:30pm and continued, with a short interval, until 11pm, by which time we had danced all 16 dances! (Louise and Helen did sit out *Nonesuch* and enjoyed the fact that it was as we had practised.) Jane swept a damsel in red who had been partnerless on to the dance floor and made her evening as an active dancer and not a spectator. - well done, Jane. The MC, Andrew Swaine, who called the dances, encouraged the band to up the tempo of some dances so there was no time as we worked our way down the sets to exchange flirtatious banter with members of the opposite sex as seen on TV! It was Doreen and Sally's first Ball, but you would not have thought so, so well did they acquit themselves and, in fact, outshine more experienced participants. The room grew quite warm as the evening progressed but it was not the heat that overcame Shirley and Jan but the cost of 3 glasses of white wine at £18! There are plans to bring in our own drink next year, disguised in water bottles. Our weeks practising the dances beforehand paid off and we had a wonderful time.

We go into training for next year's Ball straight away and hope that the 4 members who had tickets but who were prevented from joining us this time by various health conditions will be with us next year.

Wishing you all an enjoyable Christmas and all the best for 2025,



Sailing: Every Tuesday and Friday

John Stacey:

Following the success of our all day sail to the Museum of the Broads in May a further day was held in September, but this time we sailed to Ludham Bridge. An eventful day with testing winds and even more testing hire cruisers out in force. On the way to Ludham only two boats had to be pulled out of the reeds, fortunately the return trip was less incident strewn.

The 8th November brought the summer sailing season to a close and to mark the occasion the group had lunch at the The Lodge Salhouse. As it would not be possible for us to sail without the support of the Nancy Oldfield Trust we showed our appreciation by presenting Mark Elson, the assistant manager and senior instructor, with a hamper for all the staff and volunteers to enjoy.



Also, the end of the season saw the retirement of the senior instructor Charles Hare-Winton, we owe Charles a special thank you as he has been instrumental in teaching us to sail or just getting members back on the water. Without him many of us would not be sailing.



Although the summer season has ended sailing will continue during the winter, except in December and January, for the hardy few. Sailing is always subject to the weather and we have already lost a whole week to Storm Bert. Hopefully there will be fewer storms this winter, just not so that we can sail but also for the adverse effect they have for us here in Hickling and the surrounding area.

If you ever fancied a go at sailing there will be opportunities next May as we are offering a repeat of this years sailing experience. This will include a half day taster session where you will be given an opportunity to sail on Barton Broad with an instructor. Followed, if you have been bitten, by a 3 day course. This will achieve a

Level 2 RYA and will be followed up by joining the main groups sailing days on Tuesdays and/or Friday mornings with either an instructor or an experienced sailor. We sail in Yeomans that are a small keel boat and nearly impossible to capsize, unlike dinghies, they have super manoeuvrability and just good fun without getting wet. We sail out of Neatishead with the Nancy Oldfield Trust who can provide all your sailing equipment save for footwear and headwear. The Trust is equipped for all abilities and has equipment for all types of physical infirmities. They have cruisers with lifts for getting on and off the pontoon/staithe and a hoist if required for entering and exiting the Yeomans. There is also a yeoman fitted with a wheel for those not able to manoeuvre within the boat.

For those that have sailed before would like to join us we can arrange for an assessment session and provided you meet the Nancy Oldfield competency level you can also join the main sailing group with either an instructor and or experienced sailor until confidence/ability meets a level for safe sailing.

Further details will be posted in the New Year but if you are already interested please contact Ros. Spaces are limited to 6 for the 3 day course but there is possible wriggle room for more. It will be on a first come first serve basis as we share these particular sessions with the Wymondham U3A.

The dates and times of the offers have yet to be finalised but this year saw the taster session in April and the 3 days course in May at cost of £18.50 for the taster and £108 for the 3 day course. We do not expect there to be too much of a rise in the prices.

For more information please contact Ros and John Stacey on 07771914672 or email hbu3asailing@gmail.com

Members Corner

Do you have something of interest to our members? A local event perhaps. Space permitting I will post it here in the next newsletter. Please send your entry to the email address below.

T'is the season for ghostly tales, and I came across this one on a Facebook page that I follow – “Norfolk Tales and Myths”, by Haydn Brown. The tale may be known to those who have lived in Hickling for many years, but bears a re-telling for the newcomers.

THE DRUMMER BOY OF HICKLING BROAD

In summer, the Broad is alive with the laughter and enjoyment of the thousands of pleasure seekers who turn its picturesque waters into a congested tangle of every conceivable type of sailing craft. In winter, as the cold winds rustle the reeds, and the waters so picturesque in the summer have turned to dark and melancholic ice, those who have cause to be in the neighbourhood often gather round blazing log fires, ale in hand and they listen.

The wind may rattle the windows, its mournful whistling howling like a banshee across the rooftops - but every so often there sounds from the depths of the Broad the rhythmic tattoo of a distant drum and they nod to one another, knowing that the phantom drummer is once more abroad.

He lived in the early years of the 19th century, a poor drummer boy, who fell in love with the daughter of a rich and influential man. Knowing that her father would never consent to their marriage, they wed in secret. Each night they would meet in a small hut on the edge of Hickling Broad.

In winter when snow blanketed the countryside and the Broad was frozen over, she would come to their humble love nest and await his arrival.

Skating on the frozen ice, he would sound his approach by beating on his kettle drum.

Then one night as she waited, listening to the beat of her approaching husband, all went suddenly quiet. The ice had given way and sent her lover to a chilling death, deep beneath the frozen broad.

And so it is that on winter nights, when people stay huddled indoors, their windows bolted tight against the winter winds, that the rhythmic tattoo of a ghostly drum sounds across the broad and the phantom drummer resumes his eternal search for the girl whose heart he won, but whose spirit he lost long ago.



What's on at our next meetings:

December 13th

Greg Powles Christmas Show

Get ready to party and prepare yourself for fun and bedazzlement as professional performer and entertainer Greg Powles comes along with his Christmas Show to kick off the festive season. As is customary at our December meeting, everyone is welcome to bring along some snacks or nibbles to share if they wish.

January 10th

Hickling Mills and Drainage Systems

In a further part of our exploration of local history, Maggie Prettyman will present an account of our local mills and drainage system. Without these structures the land could not have been drained and Hickling would have been a very different place - or maybe not here at all! Stories of storms and smuggling as well as some unseen family photographs of the restoration of Hickling Tower Mill will make this an afternoon of unique insights into our local landscape.

All items for the newsletter should be sent to hbu3anews@gmail.com