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The Chairman and Committee of Thrapston and District U3A wish you and your families a very merry Christmas and/or Winterfest, as you prefer, and a happy and prosperous new year.



A touch of Winter from the Photographic Group.
This photograph, taken in June, is of part of the Athabasca Icefield on the border between Alberta and British Columbia, Canada.

Welcome from the Chair

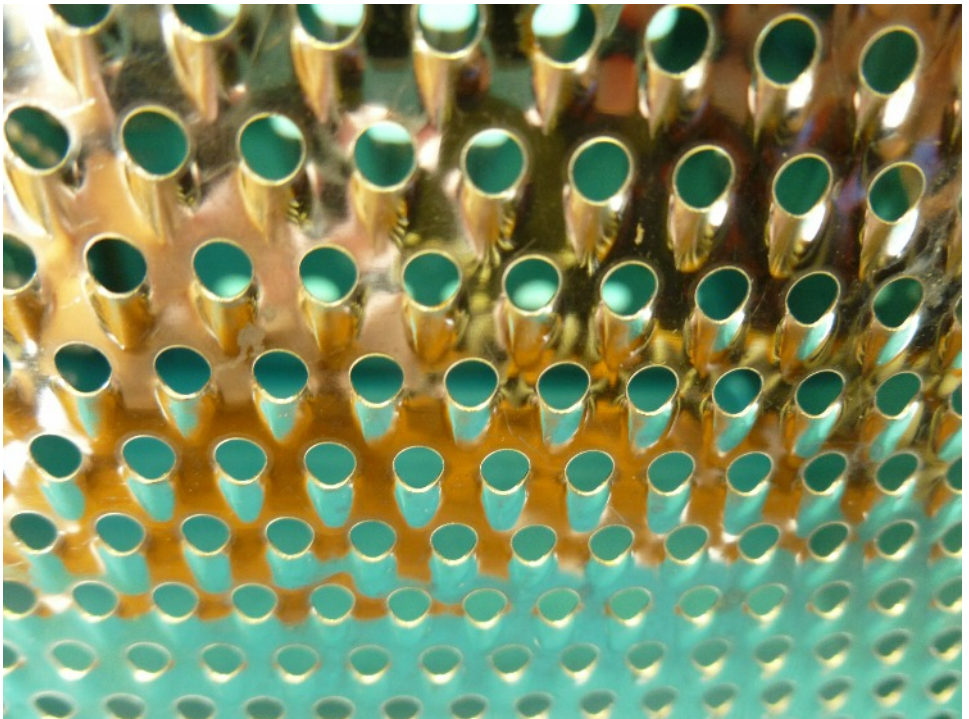
Ah yes, it's Christmas and time for the annual Showcase of our activity groups. This year we will have a wide diversity of presentations from the cerebral (Latin) to the more raucous Ukulele and Live Music groups.

It's wonderful to see our members having so much fun, after all, isn't that what U3A is all about? I attend what most people would think was a serious subject: English. Yes we do learn a lot, but it's a riot of laughter from beginning to end. If school had been this much fun, I'd have a Doctorate, instead of a bronze award for swimming.

The Showcase is an open event, so bring your relations, neighbours or anyone else who might enjoy U3A. There will be mulled wine and a variety of seasonal cakes and delicacies provided by the wonderful Cake and Bake group. Did I mention it's free? There are no entrance charges for the Showcase. A lot of work goes into making it happen, so come along and support our groups while having a great time.

See you all there.

Frank Boydell, Chairman, 01832 735797



Macro photography from the Photographic Group - do you know what it is?

Forthcoming Events

Branch meetings start at 10.30am on the third Friday of each month at the Thrapston Plaza unless stated otherwise. Doors open at 10.00am when tea/coffee and biscuits are served.

18 December **Branch Christmas Showcase** from 10:30am to noon (or maybe a bit later). Free to all with tea/coffee, mulled wine and other delectable goodies.

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6 January **Aladdin** - Due to a cancellation there are two tickets available for this show. Anyone interested should contact Glyn on 01832 735797. The coach will leave the Co-op car park at 11.30am.

15 January **Branch Meeting - Badgers** by **Brian Sanders**

12 February **Greyhound Racing** - There are a few places left for this event. A £5 deposit will secure your place. The balance (£20) **must** be paid on or before 15 January.

19 February **Branch Meeting - Mediaeval Medicine** by **Chris Carr**

16 March **Chicago** - There are two seats available for this show and the price is £43, which includes coach fare, theatre ticket and driver's tip. For details contact Pauline 732724.



18 March **Branch Meeting - Stanwick Handbell Ringers**

20 May **Branch Meeting - The Last Naval Hero. David 1st Earl Beatty** by **Roy Smart**

For **Theatre Trips** you may add your name to the lists at the Branch Meetings.

Pauline Dennison Tel: 01832 732724

The U3A holds several national events which may be of interest to you. Please check the U3A website (www.u3a.org.uk) at the events and competitions page of the Members' Area Homepage.

Places2Go

On 6 December, 12 people turned up for the Sunday Brunch. Guests brought a plate of food for themselves and hot potatoes were provided. Lots of lovely food was consumed and the camaraderie was much enjoyed by everyone.

A big thank-you to all who came along. Maddie

News from the Groups

The Science and Technology group is starting and is open to anyone who is interested in, and curious about, all aspects of science, technology and mathematics. The launch meeting is planned for 3:00pm on Monday 14 December, where decisions on when and where meetings will take place and to arrange a first programme. The opening meeting will be in February, where the group will decide on content but some of the ideas gathered include; talks by members on their specific interests, round robin discussions where everyone brings a topic of interest, visits to public lectures e.g. Cambridge University, visits to places such as Space Centre Leicester, the Science Museum and using on-line resources e.g. TED talks (www.ted.com) to learn something new. Ten people have signed up but there may be vacancies depending on where we decide to meet. If you're interested, please ring or email Glyn Hill on 01832 735797 or email: glynishillo6@aol.com

Games Group - The next meetings will all be at Manor Close on Tuesday 15 December, Tuesday 5 January and Monday 18 January. Because of residents' priorities for the Residents' Lounge at Manor Close, the days on which the Games Group can meet are liable to change.

The Cycling Group will hold its last ride of the year on 21 December. This will be your last chance to get in shape before Christmas undoes all the good work. Next year we are taking a break in January and February, when the weather tends to be at its worst. We will resume on 7 March and will ride on the second and fourth Monday of each month.

Generally rides are pleasant and uneventful, but just occasionally, an old favourite path has been changed, or even built over and we have to adapt. This happened recently and one of our riding bards wrote the following poem to commemorate the event. Enjoy, Frank

The Bike Ride

Old Frank he took us cycling, it's something that we like.
To take big breaths of country air whilst riding on a bike.
So kitted out with all we'd need for a mornings exercises
We gamely pedalled on our way in search of Frank's surprises.
A route just over 16 miles, on a bike it's just a stroll.
We huff and puff up Huntingdon Road to Titchmarsh, our first goal.
Right at Polopit then onwards, towards the A14 we rode,
Then hang a left up Cheney's drive, (now in trespass mode)!
But a lady in a great big Merc gives permission to proceed,
And puffing up another hill no hindrance did we need.
A left then right, another track, a hedge is straight ahead.

Some heaps of stone and no way round so over them instead.
Next heave the bikes across a gate, soon followed by another,
But paddock and ponies block our path. What a lot of bother.
A challenge to cross the A14 where traffic travels fast,
Then gasping on the other side this hazard is safely passed.
And now to seek a Footpath out, alas it's ill-defined.
An AA man trims back bushes so we didn't get entwined.
Along a field headland to a hardened track, now acceptable terrain,
Turn left to Keyston, go like the clappers as we're trespassing again.
Once more we lift the bikes across a gate, were getting good at this,
And down the road through Keyston, on tarmac Oh! What bliss.
We take the road to Raunds, you've guessed! It's uphill all the way.
A blustery head wind and dancing leaves helps brighten up our day.
Entering Raunds we're one man down, the pace has proved too strong.
Then take the lane to Denford and its uphill all along.
A motorist travelling much too fast pulls faces and rude signs,
In my day no real lady behaved along these lines.
At last some downhill, easy, the bike tyres 'singing' once again,
But before we've travelled 10 more yards it begins to rain.
Delayed we put on waterproofs to foil those heavy drops,
Then 10 yards further down the road, the blinking rain just stops!!!!
But Denford is now behind us and Thrapston's straight ahead.
We've nearly reached our journeys end, goodbyes are quickly said.
It's some time now since we set out, you know you've done your best.
A cup of tea and biscuit or two, and a chance to take some rest.
U3A offers many choices so fix some in your sights,
But I hope that you'll come cycling to discover Frank's delights.

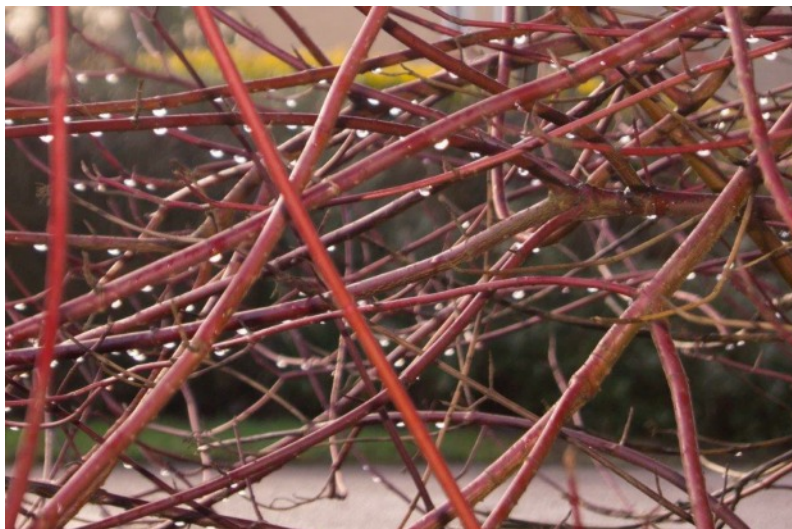
Phil Theefoot

Beware of Courier Scams

1. A courier scam has recently been reported in Ruislip, London, where a resident received a phone call from a fake 'courier' company saying a parcel was on its way. On arrival, the recipient was asked to pay a small delivery charge by credit or debit card. Unknown to them, the handheld machine was used to clone their card and, later, to withdraw a large amount of money from various cash machines.

Be wary of accepting any surprise gift or package, which you neither expected nor personally ordered, especially if it involves any kind of payment as a condition of receiving the gift or package. Also, never accept anything if you do not personally know or there is no proper identification of the sender.

2. A friend has reported that a relative in Peterborough had a neighbour who answered the door to a person wanting to deliver a bunch of flowers and a bottle of wine. The neighbour was told that there was a charge of £2.50 for the delivery of alcohol and should be paid by debit/credit card. The neighbour put a card into the card box held by the caller who had typed in the amount and then asked for the pin number to be entered. Apparently the sum to be authorised was hidden by the courier's finger/thumb and a large sum of money was authorised - £250. Please continue to be vigilant. Unexpected gifts may not be gifts at all.



Another image from the Photographic Group

Thrapston and District U3A Committee

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This newsletter is published on behalf of the committee of the Thrapston and District U3A. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Editor, or of the committee of the Thrapston and District U3A or of the U3A Trust.

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