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**Welcome from the Chair**

Welcome to December.

The winter has finally arrived, but on the upside, the Thrapston Christmas Lights are on and looking great, Advent Calendars are up and the first chocolates from them are eaten (if yours is one of those with a chocolate for each day) !

December can be a challenging time for members of the U3A, especially if you belong to a number of groups. There is a lot to be fitted into a short space of time. I hope that you are enjoying the company of friends and that you manage to catch up with all those you would like to be in touch with over the festive period.

I am pleased to be able to report that the problem we had over storage space has been resolved and all U3A belongings have been removed from the Plaza well before their deadline.

For those of you with tickets, I look forward to seeing you at our December meeting.

To all of you, on behalf of the Committee, I would like to wish you a very Happy Christmas and hope that the festive season is all that you would wish it to be.

Sheila



## Is this the end of the News ?

Mr Paul Needle

Another well attended meeting on 16th November greeted Mr Paul Needle enthusiastically for his fascinating talk on how our news is dissipated, starting with many historical references to the very beginnings of printed media, right up to the present day.

Paul is local to Northamptonshire, having been born and raised in Irthlingborough where his exposure to and interest in the news developed from his first job, like so many lads of the day, by delivering newspapers and from reading his father's daily papers. He has since worked nationally in many roles within the news and broadcasting world.

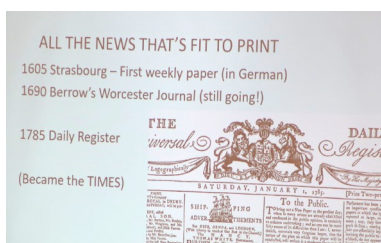


In addition to his media career, he is an ordained minister, known to many within Thrapston U3A from conducting religious services over many years.

The talk was well illustrated with slides and humorous anecdotes from a long career in the media, not only with the printed word but also in broadcasting.

Although the first recorded printed news sheet was produced in Strasbourg, Germany in 1605, the first sheets appeared in England in 1690 in Worcester, called the Berrows Journal, which is still in existence today, although obviously in a far different style. The Daily Register, later to become the Times, was founded in the 1780s and has passed through differing phases, but still is referred to as a 'Broadsheet', although now reduced to tabloid size.

Regional newspapers began to be produced late in the 19th century, with limited circulation, due to the physical communication and transport restrictions of the time, but with the arrival of the railway network, this was to change. Not only did it become easier to send daily papers from principal cities by rail, the telegraph wires beside the tracks made national electronic communication a fact of everyday life in the news industry.



The newspaper industry was controlled at some period by a group of powerful families whose power was exacted with a kind of 'gentlemen's agreement'. They tended to act with discretion, particularly on matters sensitive to the state. This situation appears to have ended with the reporting of the affair of King Edward VII with American divorcee Mrs Wallace Simpson.

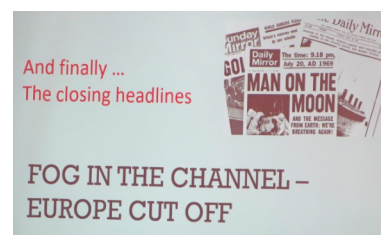
News by the printed word came under pressure due to competition from broadcasting, initially with BBC Radio in 1922 and later with the introduction of television news in 1936. The popularity of newspapers has been in a steady decline for many years; currently the slide shows no sign of arresting.

With the advent of the world wide web and social media, many people now get their news 'on-line' and, with the general use of mobile phone cameras, incidents can be posted directly on to popular social media sites with immediate effect, but perhaps not with informed comments.

Paul has seen many changes to the news media in his long career and can still be heard occasionally on local radio at BBC Radio Northampton, where his voice and easy style are instantly recognisable. In his career he has trained news presenters and many within the media.

Although now allegedly retired he still acts as a media consultant and enjoys locum ministry around Europe.

Paul Ollett



## Calendar of Events 2018 / 2019

### 2018

- 13th December      **Canons Ashby and Nottingham Christmas Market** - see page 6  
17th December      **Science & Technology Christmas Event** contact Glyn Hill  
21st December      **Christmas Event at the Plaza** - see below

### 2019

- 9th January      **White Christmas—Leicester** - see page 6  
18th January      **You're never too old to Rock'n'Roll** - Vince Eager  
Please note the change of venue for this meeting—see below.  
15th February      **Butler to Royalty** by William J French

## Branch Meetings

- When?** 3rd Friday of each month  
**Where?** The Plaza in Thrapston (except January 2019 - see below)  
**When?** from 10.30 to 12,



Visitors are also welcome to join us for a small charge of £2



## Christmas Event

Friday 21st December

Thrapston Plaza

**Doors Open at 9.40 for 10 am start**

All tickets have now been sold.

There is a waiting list, in case some are returned.

If you have purchased a ticket and find you are unable to attend, please let Polly know and she will endeavour to resell the tickets on your behalf.

Contact Polly on 01933 625181.



## *Next Month*

**Friday January 18th 2019**

Due to the refurbishment of the Plaza, this meeting will take place in

*St James' Church.*

*You're Never Too Old To Rock'n'Roll*

*by Vince Eager*



## Focus on Wednesday Morning Groups

*Time on your hands on Wednesdays ? Have a look at these group activities.....*

### MAKIN' MUSIC

We meet on the first and third Wednesday mornings at 10:00am in Thrapston Baptist Church.

We currently have a mix of instruments including both electric and acoustic guitars, bass guitar, ukuleles, keyboard, violin and tin whistles, plus vocals and kazoo.

Much of the music we play is classic pop and rock covers from the sixties, seventies and eighties including songs by John Denver, Bee Gees, Dion, Van Morrison, Carpenters, Roger Miller, Bonzo Dog Band and others.

The aim is just to have fun playing together, and to provide the opportunity and challenge to do more than you could just on your own, in a non-threatening environment. We don't mind if you just want to keep in the background, or flaunt your talents!! We're very flexible as we recognise that people have other priorities too, and can't make it to every session. That's not a problem – come when you can.

Currently we're rehearsing for the Yuletide Event where, along with the Uke Group, we'll be doing some Christmas favourites to open the event.

We're always open for new folks to join us – any instrument is welcome – including vocalists.

For more information contact Neil on 07977 413 424.



### Gardening Group

The Gardening Group meets on the second Wednesday of the month. Our start time is 10a.m. However, because we often go out on visits, the time we finish at is flexible.

At our January meeting, we try to get together to plan our programme for the year with ideas and suggestions coming from all members. This year we have had a full programme and have been on visits on ten of the twelve months. We have visited venues as diverse as The Botanical Gardens in Cambridge, a small private garden in Finedon and a large garden centre, learning things from every visit .

We will round off the year with a mince pie and mulled wine event at the leader's home, featuring a garden quiz, a gardening 'pass the parcel' and, hopefully, some gardening tips and conversation.



And then it's back to our January meeting and planning our new programme for 2019 .

We have around 12 members, which is at capacity if meeting in a member's home. As not all members attend all meetings and more often than not we are out on visits ,we could accommodate a few more. You could, of course, start a new group to run along side us !

Group Leader Angela Gyves phone : 732005

## Classical Music



We meet on the third Wednesday morning of each month, in a member's house. There is no rule really, but we usually take it in turns to provide some music and talk about it. The music is played on CDs, or using the internet (e.g. Spotify, Amazon Music, or YouTube), or from music stored on a member's computer, Windows 10 permitting.

In recent meetings we have enjoyed a selection of Spanish and British music. We have looked at the work of a couple of composers, listening to Karl Jenkins one month, followed by Bela Bartok the next month. Also, we heard a selection of opera choruses, and a personal, mixed, choice.

Future meetings include various types of sacred music, before Christmas, and later, colour in music, and perhaps some less well known works from Beethoven.

We are a small group, and would be glad to see another one or two members, so how about giving us a try? There is no need to know anything about music. It is just there to be enjoyed, which is how we 'consume' it, to use the strange modern way of talking.

Give me a call and I will gladly tell you more.

*Michael Henderson - Group Leader* (01933 461545)

## Creative Writing Group



The Group meets at 10:00 a.m. for two hours on the second Wednesday of each calendar month, in a member's Thrapston house.

It is dedicated to producing written works, such as short stories, poems and play scripts, by improving members' skills, with a view to enabling eventual publication of the individual's own work and the works of group members together.

So far it has published eight collections of selected works under the title of "Pick 'n' Mix". It is intended to publish future editions twice annually. Copies are available at £2 for the current edition and £1 for back issues, from members and at the branch's monthly meetings. This is self-funding. Each group member retains copyright of his/her own works and publication helps to establish that.

In the current year the group has also produced Narrative Summaries of documents held by Thrapston Heritage, as prefaces to accompany the originals on its web site. In the coming year it intends to support Thrapston Arts Festival, in June.

We have ten members and are unable to accommodate any more, at present. A waiting list is in operation. Membership is free but a donation towards refreshments at meetings is normal.

Group leader: David Green – details on branch website.



## News from the groups

### THEATRE AND OUTINGS

#### Outings



#### CANONS ASHBY AND NOTTINGHAM XMAS MARKET 13 DECEMBER 2018

For those booked on this trip, please meet in the Co-op Car Park at 8.40 am for 8.45 departure. Approximate timings below:

- 10.00 Arrive Canons Ashby - **please note that National Trust members should bring their NT membership cards with them**
- 10.10 Tea/coffee and a mince pie in the tearoom
- 11.00 Entry to Canons Ashby (weather permitting, a look at the gardens and church)
- 12.20 Return to coach
- 12.30 Coach departs
- 2.00 Arrive Nottingham City Centre - free time for lunch, visit to Xmas Market
- 4.50 Meet at coach pick up point
- 5.00 Coach departs
- 6.30 Arrive back at Thrapston



I will provide a map of Nottingham City Centre, together with a list of nearby eateries, but please feel free to investigate other possibilities online.

Remember that the reverse of your U3A membership card has space for emergency contact details. Please complete this and bring it with you..

#### GATES GARDEN CENTRE AND FARM VISIT 9 MAY 2019

At the January branch meeting I will be collecting the balance due for the above. If you have already secured your place with a £10 deposit please let me have the balance of £16, either by cheque made payable to Thrapston and District U3A, or cash (the correct amount if paying in cash would be most helpful.).



If you are not attending the January branch meeting could you please put your payment, in an envelope, through my letterbox, at 1 Hall Court, Sackville Street, Thrapston (new-build bungalow at the far end of the co-op car park ).

Also, if for any reason you are unable to attend, please let me know as soon as possible, as I have a reserve list for this trip.

Any queries relating to outings please email me at [jennihall207@gmail.com](mailto:jennihall207@gmail.com)

#### Theatre Trips

#### WHITE CHRISTMAS – Wednesday 9th January, (matinee)

The Curve Theatre, Leicester £45 including theatre ticket and coach travel.  
Owing to a recent cancellation, this fantastic festive show now has one available seat left. Don't miss this opportunity to enjoy memorable songs and a storyline to wash away the post-Christmas blues.



#### ANNIE - 3rd July, at Milton Keynes theatre.

Price (including coach travel) is £40.

This is a powerful musical set in New York during the 1930's Depression. Little Annie is forced to live a life of misery at Miss Hannigan's orphanage. Her luck changes, however, when she is chosen to spend a fairytale Christmas with billionaire Oliver Warbucks... This show includes unforgettable songs such as 'It's The Hard-Knock Life', 'Easy Street' and 'Tomorrow' .



**Only six places. Please use the email address below if you are interested.**

## Theatre Trips continued

Our newest exciting venture is to see the musical ***GREASE*** at the Leicester Curve theatre on Wednesday 11th September at 2:15pm.



Set in the late 1950's, in an American high school called Rydell, it provides rebellion and romance between the cool, gum-chewing, chain-smoking "Burger Palace Boys" and the bobby sox and pedal pushers known as the "Pink Ladies". Memorable songs include "Greased Lightnin'", "We Go Together" and "Mooning", attributed to Buddy Holly, Little Richard and Elvis Presley. Having acquired a somewhat cult following, this is a spectacular retro show, full of entertainment and fun.

Tickets are priced at £45 to include coach travel. At our last Branch meeting, we received a lot of interest and, as a result, there are only a few places remaining. Contact details below.

***Please remember, tickets are non-refundable.***

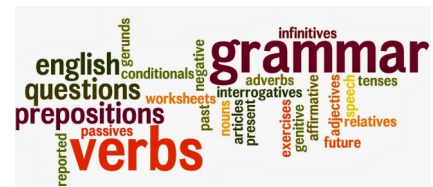
***JUST ONE MORE THING...*** on theatre and outing trips we now require an emergency contact number. This must be someone who is not on the same trip as you and is easily contactable in case of an emergency. Please remember to bring your membership card with you on all theatre trips and outings, just in case.

Please contact Moira for further information or to inform us of your emergency contact number.

*mo.beth@hotmail.co.uk Tel: 07960 640161*

## New English Group

As there have been no vacancies in the English Group for some time, I propose to start a second group. If there is enough interest, the first meeting will be on 17 January and thereafter (probably) on the third Thursday afternoon of each month.



As in the original group, the intention is to look at how our language developed over more than a thousand years and is still changing today. We can look at its current structure and why some ways of speaking are considered better than others. Are the people who write to "Pedants' Corner" in TAM right to bemoan the loss of standards (and the influence of dreadful Americanisms)? What is grammar anyway; who invented it and who sets the rules? And where do eponyms, malapropisms, idioms, metaphors, euphemisms, accents and dialects, to name but a few things, fit into the story? (And have I committed a sin by starting a sentence with and?) We can also look at the rich collection of literature that has been written in English; Beowulf, Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, Milton, Shakespeare, Dickens, Jane Austen; the list is almost endless.

Members of the group are welcome to decide on the format and to make contributions. All that matters is that meetings should be thought provoking, informative and above all, enjoyable.

If you would like to join the new group, or wish to know more, please speak to me at any meeting or ring 01832 733792

Group Leader            Glyn James

## Photography Group

On 3rd December we had a “Still Life” session photographing things we brought to the meeting. Attached are one or two of the many results we had --- as well as some members taking their pictures. The pictures on this page are courtesy of Linda Vickerman.



### ***Thrapston and District U3A Committee***

Chair: Sheila Underwood

Vice Chair: Wendy Davies

Treasurer: Tricia James

Secretary: Ian Byrnes

Groups Co-ordinator: Roger Davies

Membership: Pauline Dennison

Publicity: Sue Campbell

Speaker Seeker: Paul Ollett

Newsletter Editor: Wendy Davies

New Members Rep: Brenda Berry

IT Operations Manager /Website Manager: Neil Busby

Access Officer: Glyn Hill



### **A note from the Editor**

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.

**Please note that items for inclusion in the next newsletter should reach the Editor by the first Friday in the month.**

Editor and publisher : Wendy Davies - email: [editorthrapstonu3a@gmail.com](mailto:editorthrapstonu3a@gmail.com)

Website : [www.thrapstonu3a.co.uk](http://www.thrapstonu3a.co.uk) where committee contact details may be found along with details of all the groups.

You can also join us on **Facebook** – **Thrapston and District U3A**