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CHAIRS WELCOME



You will have read in last month's Newsletter that we need to have an EGM (Extraordinary General Meeting) in March. This is because we have now registered with the Charity Commission and it would be best, in the Committee's opinion, if we changed the auditor for the accounts. There are several reasons for this, but one is so that we can forward-plan. Our overall transactions in a year are very close to the next financial threshold when more stringent rules will apply. The EGM should only take a few minutes unless there are a lot of questions for us to try and answer! Your Committee is trying to forward-plan as our U3A continues to grow and flourish. We would like some information and feedback from you in order to do this, so we are compiling a questionnaire which will be sent out shortly. There will be hard copies of the questionnaire available at the next Plaza meeting, so if you would prefer that, please pick one up there.

Please try and complete one for each member and return it by April 1st either into the box at the March Plaza meeting or give it to a member of the Committee. We would like them all in by then so that we can collate the information and discuss it in our Committee meeting on April 5th. If you complete the form online, please e-mail it to editorthrapstonu3a@gmail.com.

Please can I also remind you that you do need to know your Membership Number if you are booking a place on any trip or event. Recording your membership number complies with GDPR and is quicker to write down correctly than a telephone number or e-mail address. Our database now sorts by membership number too.

As I write this, the Sun is shining and the weather is lovely for February. It feels like summer rather than Spring. I hope you are all enjoying the sunshine and the good weather.

Looking forward to seeing you on March 15th at the Plaza.

Sheila



A Butler to Royalty - a talk by *William French*

Dressed smartly in full butler's fig, complete with tail coat, William arrived at The Plaza a full hour before he was due to speak to us. He set out photos relating to people and boats which had played an important part in his working life in the Royal Navy and as a butler.



When he joined the Navy, William first trained as a chef, then as a steward. When the Falklands conflict began to brew, he went for gun and First Aid training, which was handy, as William was sent in as one of the medical team to assist casualties on the stricken Sir Galahad. Once back in Blighty, William was, after a surprise interview on the Royal Yacht Britannia, appointed as Steward in the Royal Apartments. This part of his talk gave us lots of insights into regulations on board ship, the Royals and some of the places he visited. Did you know, for instance, that Britannia is the only ship in the fleet to have a proper steering wheel? Or that the engine room is kept so spotless that President Reagan asked to see the real one? Did you know that sailors on board wear white plimsolls (no noise, please!) and trousers equipped not with zips or flies, but with a front flap, to avoid wardrobe malfunctions? And did you know that the Queen's food is tasted twice before she eats it? Her Majesty is very nice and chatty, whereas Prince Philip is grumpy. He did not have a bad word for the others, but Princess Alexandra seems to have been a particular favourite. With Britannia, William visited China, Singapore, Australia and South Africa, among others. He also offered his own view on the accident in which Princess Diana was fatally injured.

When he married, William left the Navy to become a civilian butler first at Buckingham Palace, then for Lord Rothermere, followed by Mr and Mrs Tom Cruise for 4 years. Then Paramount Studios beckoned, so William now enjoys working with film stars, Sean Connery being a favourite of his.

William gave us a talk full of fascinating details which held his audience spellbound – and yet, with not a note in sight ! He is donating his fee to the Medical Detection Dogs charity.

Roger Davies

Groups Co-ordinator



Calendar of Events 2019

15th March	Shipwrecked in Antarctica by Georgie Hale PLUS EGM — see below
12th April	Trip to Greyhounds - see Irene Gandy
26th April	A Tribute to Les Dawson by Mike Leonard - see below
9th May	Gates Garden Centre and Farm Visit - see page 6
17th May	A.G.M. followed by You're Never Too Old to Rock n'Roll - see page 8
28th June	Network outing to Lamport Hall - see page 7

Branch Meetings

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

Please note that doors open at 10 a.m.



This Month

Friday March 15th

Shipwrecked in Antartica

by Georgie Hale



Next Month

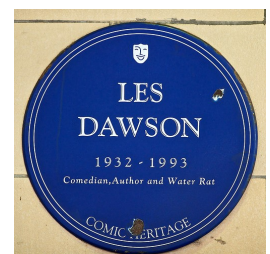
Friday April 26th

Please note **NOT** on April 19th
(as this is Good Friday)

A Tribute to

Les Dawson

by Mike Leonard



Please Note: There will be an Extraordinary General Meeting at the start of this month's meeting for the purpose of changing the "examiner of the accounts".

**** EGM March 15th at The Plaza, Thrapston at 10.30 ****

Focus on..... *Groups that meet on Wednesday afternoons (Part II)*

Play reading

The Play Reading Group was formed in Spring 2018 and meets at 2:00 p.m. every second Wednesday of the month at a member's house in Wigsthorpe; we currently have six members and plenty of room for more - whom we would welcome most enthusiastically.



Meetings last 2 hours, or slightly longer. Each member pays 50p per meeting, towards the cost of hiring play scripts which are sourced from Northamptonshire Libraries' collection of over 800 titles, including some scripts from famous TV shows and series.

So far we have read:-

An Inspector Calls - J.B. Priestly

The Real Inspector Hound - Tom Stoppard

The Bats - Agatha Christie

Time and Time Again - Alan Ayckbourn

Don't Start Without Me - Joyce Rayburn

The Man Most Likely To... - Joyce Rayburn

By the time you read this we will have read *Absent Friends* by Alan Ayckbourn. April's offer is *Blue Remembered Hills* by Denis Potter. Further plays may be suggested by members.

It's not about being an actor, (we do it all sitting down), nor an intellectual, (none of us are), it's about having fun and escaping into fiction for a couple of hours, (which we do).

Two members have written humorous pieces for filling time and these may well be used in the style of 'radio sketches' at Thrapston Arts Festival in June. (We'll see!)

No experience required; only 'qualification' necessary is ability to read and preparedness to do so out loud, amongst friends, in comfort. What's not to like?

For further details:-- **David Green, Group Leader (01832 720269)**

French Revivers

This group is into its sixth year already - I think - which is quite a compliment to the enthusiasm and the dogged commitment of the members. We aim to conduct our meetings in French, though English creeps in during the "pause-café" in order to avoid brain-ache !



We discuss a wide variety of topics, from politics to gastronomy, historical figures to pop singers. Sometimes, members are tasked with preparing a short presentation. At others, we read about people and events in French history. The Revolution (1789 >) is our current focus. The atmosphere in the group is relaxed and no-one is judgemental. We all make mistakes, but tolerate each others' lapses cheerfully, because we enjoy each others' company and we enjoy consolidating and developing our vocabulary and our grammatical skills.

We meet on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. Unfortunately, we cannot accept new members at the moment, but Jan Pacey's excellent "French Encore" group can. They meet on Thursdays.

Roger Davies Group Leader

Classical music meets on the third Wednesday afternoon of each month. We are a long established group and have eleven members. We enjoy listening to music and usually take turns to present pieces from a particular composer; Bach, Beethoven, Jenkins, or a theme ; choral music, Spring, Viennese music. We also enjoy it when a member provides a mix of his or her favourite tracks.

The group also attends concerts, most often in Oundle.

We take it in turns to host the group, although this is by no means a requirement

It's a relaxed friendly group and at present we have one vacancy.

Please contact **Glyn** on **01832 735797**



News from the groups

Nordic Walk around Grafham Water with the Friday Nordic Walkers

We met at the Thrapston Co-op for cars to take us to Marlow Car Park at Grafham Water, where we started the anti - clockwise walk round the reservoir.

It was a bit damp as we set off, but by the time we had covered a couple of miles, the sun had started breaking through. The water level was very low (25% empty) but still too deep for us to take a short cut.

It was dry underfoot, as 95% of the track is tarmac

or gravel, with good walking. The trees are all bare at this time of the year, with most of the common local birds singing, and we have not heard any summer visitors yet.

It was lovely to see the daffodils and snowdrops but no bluebells out yet, although their leaves are showing. As the walk progressed we met others, running, cycling and walking, and a young lady came walking by. I said "It's us who are supposed to walk fast with these poles to help us along", but "whoosh" and she had gone. Great to see the young people being active. It was good meeting some old friends of ours, out walking & cycling for exercise.

Having a break after 6 miles, at the cafe near Perry, for a cup of tea and a sandwich, renewed our energy for the last 3 miles along the dam wall.

Finishing the walk with more tea & chatting, we talked about our 9 mile walk. We only do a walk this long once a month, the usual being about 5 to 6 miles on Friday afternoons.

If any of you would like to try a short walk, Polly runs a friendly walk every Tuesday afternoon at 2 pm from the Thrapston FC car park, Meadow Lane. We have spare poles available if you would like to try.

Rod Brown.



THEATRE AND OUTINGS.....



Outings

Gates Garden Centre and Farm Visit 9 May 2019



This trip is fully booked but please add your name to the reserve list if you are interested in attending.

If you are on this trip and have not yet been given your receipt for the balance paid, please come and see me at the next branch meeting.

The proposed itinerary is as follows

1. Meet at Co-op car park at 10.30 am to depart Thrapston at 10.40 am
2. Arrive Gates Garden Centre approx 11.45
3. Just over 2 hours free time for shopping, lunch, coffee etc
4. Depart Gates Garden Centre at 2.00 pm
5. Arrive Alma Bank Farm at 2.15 pm; Farm tour starts at 2.30pm
6. Depart Alma Bank Farm at 5.00 pm to arrive Thrapston approx 6.15 pm

PLEASE NOTE Appropriate footwear must be worn for the farm visit

Peckover House & gardens and Elgoods Brewery and gardens 26 June 2019

There are still a few places available. If you are interested, please let me know asap, as I must confirm our numbers with Peckover House and Elgoods.

I will be collecting the money for this trip at the March meeting on the 15th.

The cost per person depends on whether you are a member of the National Trust and if you are doing the Elgoods Brewery tour. The breakdown is as follows:

Peckover House NT member - £12; Peckover House non member - £20 ; Elgoods Brewery - £7

All cheques should be made payable to Thrapston and District U3A. If you are not attending the branch meeting on 15 March, can you please put your payment through my letterbox at 1 Hall Court Sackville Street Thrapston (new build bungalow at the far end of the co-op car park).

If you have any questions please contact me (see below).

Email - jennihall207@gmail.com or phone 01832 358721

Theatre Trips

Annie - 3rd July, at Milton Keynes Theatre.

This is now fully booked, but if you are still keen to attend, we have a 'reserve' list in case of last minute cancellations.



Leicester Curve Theatre - Wednesday 11th September, 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.

We are now collecting from those who have already signed up.

Please remember, tickets are non-refundable.

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

History walks

Brenda and Glyn have been working on this year's programme which runs from April to October and we have arranged walks which include Peterborough Cathedral, Thrapston, an archaeological walk at Stanwick Lakes and Titchmarsh.

Our first is on Tuesday 16th April at 2 p.m. at Kimbolton Castle (1.30 at the Co-op for lifts) The castle is used as a private school and so the visit is in the Easter holiday period.

It costs £5 per person and you should allow two hours for the visit, as it includes a walk around the exterior.

There are forty places as they are happy to provide two guides.

Please sign up at the March monthly meeting

or contact Glyn phone 01832 735797

or email glynishill06@aol.com



Network visit to Lamport Hall and Gardens 28th June 2019

The Area Network organises a trip each year and this year is visiting Lamport Hall. If you are interested, contact them directly.

Cost: £13 per person (includes cream tea)

Please let us know of any dietary requirements

Visit includes the Museum and Church; Gardens and House

For more details, email: u3anorthantsnetwork@hotmail.com

Please note: This is a private visit for Northamptonshire U3A members



New Member's Coffee Morning

A number of new members were welcomed to a coffee meeting on Monday February 25th.

They enjoyed meeting several members of the committee and some Group Leaders over refreshments and were able to find out more about our U3A.





Advance Notice of A.G.M.

The Thrapston and District U3A Annual General Meeting will be held at The Plaza, Thrapston, on Friday 17th May 2019, starting at 10.20 a.m.

It is hoped to keep this as short as possible, as it will be followed by Vince Eager's talk entitled "You're never too old to Rock n'Roll".

Further details of the AGM and the formal notice will appear in the next issue.

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

Website : 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**