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CHAIR'S WELCOME

In response to your concerns over being able to see the speaker from the back of the Plaza at our monthly meetings we tried a raised platform at our April meeting . This seems to have helped and we have therefore booked the platform for all our Plaza meetings. The Town Council had also been very helpful in organising the installer of the audio visual equipment to come our last meeting. It meant that we could discuss our problems with him and find out how to operate the system.

I just have to remember how to use the new microphone !

It was good to see the Access seats at the front of the hall being used too. These seats are for anyone with access issues . This may be mobility or equally it may concern hearing or seeing the speaker. If you would like to reserve one of the seats please see Glynis , our Access Officer.

This month is our AGM . The Plaza doors will open at 9.45 a.m. so we can start earlier at 10.15 am. This will give us time to have the AGM and still enjoy our speaker.

I look forward to seeing you there.

Sheila



A Tribute to Les Dawson – Mr Mike Leonard

The April meeting saw a welcome return to Thrapston of Mike (following from his previous talk on School Holiday Fiascos) with an excellent presentation on the late, and sadly missed, entertainer Les Dawson.

Mike commenced his presentation with the recitation of one of Les Dawson's familiar monologues in which he described a disastrous 'cruise' in Les's lugubrious style and the audience responded with laughter that we are sure would have made Les proud.



He went on to describe the main events in Les's extraordinary life that saw him rise from being a 'slum kid' to his appearance as 'Top of the Bill' in the 1971 Royal Command Performance at the London Palladium. Eventually he was voted by his fellow entertainers into the position of 'King Rat', among the highest accolades in show business.

Les was from a humble background, born in March 1931 into an impoverished inner city area of Manchester called Collyhurst. He attended the local primary school, where it was first discovered that he could write short stories that were of interest to his young peers. This was the very start of a career that included the writing of some 15 books, many of which were of a humorous nature.

His first mentor was a teacher at his secondary school named Mr Hetherington who, after punishing him for not paying attention in class, paid him a supreme compliment when he said that Les had the qualities to be a fine writer.



Mike disclosed an interesting insight into the Dawson career path, from leaving school at 14 years old to join the local Co-op, followed by an unsuccessful spell as an apprentice electrician. Eventually, Les was called up to do his National Service in the British Army where he served two and a half years, basic training at Catterick Camp leading eventually to a posting in Germany.

On leaving military service he tried Professional Boxing but was not good enough to make a career and was frequently knocked out. This was followed by a spell in Paris where he worked as a pianist in a striptease club that also served the local population as a brothel. His many jobs included a newspaper reporter for a local paper in Bury, Lancashire.

Mike played extracts of Les's piano performances with incorrect notes, changing tempos and familiar off key phases whilst his audience continued singing along following the musical score properly. It invoked many memories in our audience and hearty laughter rolled around the Plaza.

Les Dawson was a regular performer on our TV screens in the 70s, 80s and early 90s since being encouraged to appear on Hughie Green's talent show 'Opportunity Knocks' by his first wife Meg. Sadly Meg contracted cancer and passed away in 1986 leaving Les devastated.

Later, Les met a young lady, Tracey, who served him drinks at his local hotel and a friendship developed leading to a romance and the couple were married in 1989. Sadly they could only enjoy two years of married life before Les suffered a severe heart attack whilst undergoing a health check at the local hospital and died.

Coincidentally Mike used to visit the same hotel every year where he played bridge. He secured a meeting with Tracey, with the assistance of the manager of the hotel and when he spelled out his admiration for Les and his work and told her that he wished to prepare a talk on Les Dawson he was delighted to receive her full approval and assistance with his research, leading to the fine presentation we enjoyed at our meeting.



Paul Ollett

Calendar of Events 2019

17th May	A.G.M. followed by You're Never Too Old to Rock n'Roll - see page 8
1st—8th June	Thrapston Arts Festival - see page 5
21st June	Love me tender—an Elvis Biography - see below
26th June	Peckover House and Elgoods - see page 6
28th June	Network outing to Lamport Hall

Monthly Plaza Meetings

When? 3rd Friday of each month
Where? The Plaza in Thrapston
When? from 10.30 to 12

*Please note that doors open at 9.45 a.m. this month
Visitors are also welcome to join us for a small charge of £2*



This Month

Friday May 17th

**** A.G.M. ****

followed by

**You're Never Too Old
To Rock n' Roll**
by Vince Eager



Next Month

Friday 21st June

***Love me tender—
an Elvis Biography***

by
Tricia Thompson



Focus on.....Groups that meet on Thursday Afternoons

Bridge Group

The Bridge group meets on the second Thursday of the month at 2pm for two hours. We meet in Thrapston at a member's home. We play contract bridge, and it's good fun and not too serious. We don't give formal lessons, but help and encourage those who are a bit rusty or new to the game.



Although we only meet once a month, some members meet for a game at other times. We are full with 12-14 regular attenders, but, if you are interested, your name can be included on the waiting list.

Liz Bryan Group Leader 734 221

English Group 2

The second English group, meeting monthly on the third Thursday afternoon usually at my home, was formed because the first group had been full for some time.

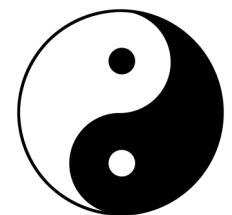


Like the original group we are looking at how our language developed over more than a thousand years and how it is still changing today. We look at its structure and why some ways of speaking are preferred to others and whether the people who write to "Pedants' Corner" in TAM, for example, are right 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 will 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. Numbers are limited to encourage group discussion, so sadly for the moment this group is full too. Further information from **Glyn James - 733 792**

Tai Chi

We meet every Thursday afternoon in the St John Ambulance Hall, Bull Ring, Thrapston, for an hour of Tai Chi and Qigong. This consists of gentle, low impact exercises which strengthen our core muscles to promote improved balance, good health and help beat stress. We laugh frequently, usually trying to remember left from right, but we finish feeling relaxed and stress-free.



Unfortunately we have no vacancies at present, but when there are, there will be a note in the Newsletter.

Linda Vickerman ... Group Leader R 380 244

News from the groups

LOCAL HISTORY WALK 27 JUNE 2019

The next walk will be led by Neil Busby and is in part of Thrapston. It starts outside the St James Church Hall at 10.30 a.m. and finishes at about 12 noon.



"Thrapston was a thriving Saxon community - then the Normans arrived"

Numbers are limited to 22 - so please sign up at the next meeting or telephone **Brenda** on **730 225**. There is a charge of £2 per person which will be donated to the Thrapston Local History Group

Science and Technology Group

Abbey Pumping Station is a hidden gem; 130 years of history based in Leicester Museum of science and technology. We had a brilliant tour guide, Guy, who led us from boilers to beam engines to feeder ponds. It was a morning of stunning Victorian architecture and forward thinking sewerage management.



Highly recommended, especially on Steaming days.

In March, we had a fascinating talk on Silk from Mandy Dawkins and our visit this month is to a cider brewery. We have 28 members and so I'm keeping a waiting list for new members.

Glyn. AccessThrapstonU3a@gmail.com

Advance Notice



The **Making Music** and **Ukulele** Groups have teamed up with the **Creative Writing** and **Play Reading** Groups for two 'Evenings of Music and Comedy' at the Baptist Church on Wednesday 5th and Friday 7th June. This will be open to the public and refreshments will be available in an informal cafe atmosphere. Admission will be free, but donations will be welcomed.

The **Creative Writing** Group also plans a display in Thrapston Library throughout the week.

The **Stitchers** Group is planning a wall hanging depicting our U3A interest groups. This will hang in the Baptist Church, alongside examples of members' recent work.

The **Lace Making Group** will also be displaying examples of their craft in the Baptist Church.

The **Flower Bunch** are planning floral arrangements for the Baptist church, also; this venue is certainly supportive of the Festival and will, doubtlessly, look wonderful.

The **Photography** Group will display examples of its work at Bennett's Café in town; as this may be refreshed from day to day it should be worth visiting more than once.

Editor : I am sure that all those participating would appreciate your support!

THEATRE AND OUTINGS.....

Outings



Peckover House & gardens and Elgoods Brewery and gardens

26 June 2019

This trip is full but please add your name to the reserve list if you are interested

Meet in the Co-op car park at 9.20

Peckover House gardens and tearoom open at 11.00

House tour booked for 12.00 (approx 1 hour)

Elgoods Brewery 2.00 - tour starts at 2.15

Coach will depart from Elgoods Brewery car park at 4.00



NEW - Sandringham and Hunstanton -

19 September 2019



Approximate cost (depending on numbers) £28 per person

The itinerary for the day would include a tour of the house and gardens at Sandringham and free time in Hunstanton for lunch, shopping or a stroll on the beach.

If you are interested, please come to the Theatre and Outings Group table at the May Plaza meeting and add your name to the list.

Theatre Trips

We have **three** exciting musicals planned for the coming months;



GREASE Wednesday 11th September, Leicester Curve

Price £45pp, 3 PLACES REMAINING

Set in the late 1950's in an American high school called Rydell, this play provides rebellion and romance between the cool, gum-chewing, chain-smoking "Burger Palace Boys" and the bobby soxers 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.

CALENDAR GIRLS Thursday 10th October, Royal & Derngate, Northampton,

price £45pp, 9 PLACES REMAINING

Music by Gary Barlow, it is a true story of a WI group who raised money for a cancer charity by posing nude for a calendar. Tastefully done, it is an inspiring story of how communal strength and tenacity can help to overcome tragedy.



Amie Wednesday 3rd July, Milton Keynes theatre. Now fully booked.

Please note, all our theatre trips are matinee performances. The coach will depart from the Co-op, Thrapston at 10:30am, so please make sure you arrive in plenty of time. If you have any mobility issues and/or equipment, please let us know beforehand, so we can accommodate you as comfortably as possible!

Please be aware that an option for payment online is now available; please ask for details.

Please remember, tickets are non-refundable.

Moira - phone 07960 640 161

Greyhounds Trip

Irene Gandy arranged the sponsorship of Race 8 on April 12th.

The evening is a regular event on Thrapston U3A calendar. This time it coincided with the Diamond Wedding Anniversary of Keith and Margaret, who presented the trophy to "Mary Annie", the winner of Race 8. The coach was included in the price & everyone had an enjoyable time, even if some pockets were lighter on the return journey .

Thanks Irene; looking forward to the next oneLinda Lewis



shutterstock - 194321390

New Group: Vintage Popular Recorded Music

If you are interested in vintage popular music and would like to listen to and talk about vinyl records and vintage recording artists, please contact either JOHN PERCY on 720 130, who would love to hear from you,

or ROGER, Groups Co-ordinator, R. 623 047.

Talk to us at The Plaza on May 17th if you prefer.

Thrapston & District U3A



Registered Charity (Number 1179593)

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

May 17th 2019 to Commence at 10.15 Doors will open at 09.45.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence,
2. Minutes of the 2018 AGM,
3. Minute of the 15/03/2019 EGM
4. Chairman's Report
5. Group Co-ordinator's Report
6. Treasurer's Report
7. Approval of the examined accounts
8. Approve appointment of the Examiner of Accounts
9. Election of the Committee for 2019/20*
(Chairman, Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Business Secretary, Executive Members)
and a committee of 8 other members

Ian Byrnes

Business Secretary

16/03/2019

Annual Financial Statement will be published on the Thrapston & District U3A website shortly.



Did you see.....?

Thrapston U3A Research Group appear on the Third Age Trust website, in the *Sources* section, with a report on the work done with the National Trust into



the life of Meriel Tresham (the wife of Sir Thomas Tresham of Lyveden New Bild).

If you missed it, this is where you can view it.

<https://www.sources.u3a.org.uk>



Telephone numbers given in the newsletter are usually preceded by the Thrapston STD code—01832. Any Raunds numbers (indicated by R) need the STD code 01933

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**