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### Welcome from the Chair



I hope you all enjoyed Halloween and Bonfire night and are now planning for the next event, Christmas.

The tickets for our December meeting went very quickly and are all sold. I know a lot of you are looking for your 1960s outfits. There are a range of possibilities ..ABBA, Beatles or Mary Quant . Take your pick !1960s dress is optional but it would be lovely if you could join in the spirit of the event.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome two members to the committee. Glyn Hills has kindly volunteered to take over the role of Publicity Officer and Brenda Berry has offered to be our New Members Representative. We have co-opted them both onto the committee until the AGM next year.

I promised you that the committee would consider all the replies from the consultation about the hard copies of the newsletter and make a decision at the November committee meeting. We have done that and decided that we will , obviously, still send the newsletter out by email but for those who have received hard copies in the past the best way forward is to make sure the Newsletter goes on the website (as it has in the past ). It can then be accessed at the library (free on Fridays), but if you would still like your own copy then you can have one at a cost of £1.00 per month to cover the cost of printing, stationery and postage. The November and December copies will be delivered as normal, but in January, the new system will come into force. The details of the arrangements are on a flyer included with the printed copies of this newsletter.

Looking forward to seeing you at the November meeting .

Sheila

November 2017



## The Plague Doctor by David Bell

The audience numbers set a new record for U3A attendance at our monthly meeting on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October when we were pleased to welcome Mr David Bell of Eyam, Derbyshire to speak to us.



David had lived for many years in Newcastle upon Tyne and listed the likes of Ant & Dec, and Jimmy Nail from the world of show business among his former immediate neighbours. Upon reaching retirement age and largely at the insistence of his wife he was encouraged to leave the North East and set up a new home in a cottage at Eyam, "The Plague Village", in the Peak District.

At the outset, the idea of living in a place inundated with tourists had little appeal to him but his acquisition of knowledge of the village history, in particular with regard to that of his new home, won him round.



David had structured his humorous presentation around medical treatment for the common man or woman in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century and what the unfortunate sufferer might expect from his local Physician when presenting themselves for treatment.

Diagnosis techniques were primitive, far removed from the pathology of today and assessments of ailments were largely made from inspection of the patient's urine, even to the point where the doctor might actually taste the liquid to test for type 2 diabetes.

David gave us a tale of treatment given to the famous diarist of the time, Samuel Pepys, who required an operation to remove a 'stone' from his bladder. The eye wateringly painful procedure was carried out without anaesthetics or sterile conditions on Mr Pepys' kitchen table; a bold commitment by the patient who knew that his chances of survival were somewhat limited.

David's fascinating talk was graphically illustrated through its course with a wide variety of 'props' including a cucumber and an inflatable 'Samuel Pepys' but it appears that some of the medicines used in the 17<sup>th</sup> century contained chemicals that can still be found in treatments prescribed today.



The presentation concluded with a story that had a happy ending from 'The Plague Village', involving the former 17<sup>th</sup> century inhabitant of David's home who, after burying his plague-stricken wife and children, saw out the plague crisis living in a wooden hut that he had built near a source of fresh water, at the end of the garden. He lived alone with his pet dog as his only companion until the dog ran off. However, he was visited sometime later by a widow from the village, who had caught and returned the dog, bringing him the good news that the plague had gone from the village. After a further two years the couple were married and raised a family themselves.



The presentation was well received and several U3A members were heard to comment that it was by far the best speaker we had had. Praise indeed as we always have interesting and competent people to entertain us.

Paul Ollett

Speaker Seeker

**Calendar of Events 2017–18**

**2017**

- ★ 17 November **Branch Meeting - Day in the life of TV Licence enforcement officer by Mike Long**
- ★ 24 November **Friends of the Library meeting , Plaza - see below**
- ★ 29 November **Rockingham Castle tour - details on page 6**
- ★ 30 November **Stitching Group's First Meeting - see page 5**
- ★ 15 December **U3A Yuletide Event - ticket holders only**

**2018**

- ★ 19 January **Branch Meeting - Mr Philip Saxby—Cider Maker**
- ★ 1 February **Mama Mia, Milton Keynes - details on page 6**

**Creative Writing Group Donate Money to Thrapston St. John Ambulance**

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Our U3A Creative Writing Group has given £150 to Thrapston St. John Ambulance.

The local branch is currently refurbishing their hall in the Bull Ring and the money given will help towards this refurbishment. Thrapston St. John Ambulance have been an important part of the local community for many years and the Creative Writing Group were pleased to help by donating some of their surplus funds, which have accumulated from the sale of their books of creative writing.

The Group's treasurer David Read is seen in the photograph donating the money to a representative of Thrapston St. John Ambulance.



***Libraries under threat***

No matter where you live, either in Thrapston or our surrounding villages, our libraries provide a vital community function—not only books, but also the venue for obtaining bus passes and Blue Badges, free IT access, parent and toddler activities, buddy support and a multitude of other services.



You may have heard that Northamptonshire County Council is reviewing the provision of the Library Service throughout the county and most, if not all libraries in our area are under threat of closure.

There will be a public meeting, organised by the Friends of Thrapston Library, in the Plaza, on 24th November at 7.30 pm and you are encouraged to go along to find out more as clearly, such proposals will have a direct effect on the health and well-being of our community.

## Focus on.....Creativity

To quote Maya Angelou, “You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.”

Editor

### *Flower Arranging Group*



We usually meet on the last Friday in the month in the Shrubberies in Woodford at 10 am.

We choose a theme, share our knowledge and help each other to produce an arrangement. Past challenges have used foliage, autumn colours, 3 blooms, and corsages! Recently we visited and enjoyed a Christmas Floral Extravaganza at the Lighthouse Theatre in Kettering.



The next meeting is on  
Fri 23rd Nov ...  
we will hopefully learn how to make  
paper flowers.

It is always fun!  
Interested?



Contact Linda ([linannvic2000@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:linannvic2000@yahoo.co.uk))

### *Art Groups*

Currently, the two Art groups meet at a member's house on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month—one group in the morning and a second in the afternoon. This popular group, which works with a number of different mediums, has a waiting list.



**\*\*\*PLEA FOR HELP \*\*\***

Mandy has been running the group for a number of years and feels it is time for someone else to take over as group leader. This person does not need to be a teacher but a facilitator, arranging the venue and providing new ideas and inspiration for the group.



If you feel able to help to allow the group to continue, please contact Mandy or the Groups Co-ordinator.

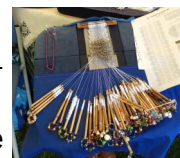
Mandy 734 613

Groups Co-ordinator— Roger Davies phone : 07812 102773

Email : [groupsthrapstonu3a@gmail.com](mailto:groupsthrapstonu3a@gmail.com)

## Lace Making Group

The group meets on the 4th Tuesday of the month from 2 to 4 pm at the Thrapston Junior School. Some of the members had been making lace for some time and others started as complete beginners, but all enjoy learning the skills that were common in the Thrapston area in the late 19th century. Many ladies made lace at home and supplied local milliners and dressmakers, as well as sending much of their work down to London.



The group are actively engaged in demonstrating their skills in the area, whether to the public at Stanwick Lakes or Wellingborough Museum, or to local school children, as part of their studies on Victorian Life, requiring the ladies to dress in Victorian costume, complete with bonnets! They also enjoy visits to Lace Fairs and exhibitions.



New members are always welcome.

For more details,  
contact Margaret Bland  
Group Leader  
Phone : 732761



## Papercraft

We meet on the second and fourth Monday of each month, from 2 to 4pm, at my house. There is a charge of £4/session which provides materials, access to equipment....and refreshments! We make cards of various types, though the skills acquired are easily transferable to the making of small gifts, home décor, picture-making etc.

There are currently three vacancies in the group and if you are interested, please contact me, Irene Gandy, Tel: 732 948



## \*\*\*\*\*New Group\*\*\*\*\*



## Stitching Group

If you sew, crochet or knit you may be interested in joining like-minded souls to share your love of handicrafts. We hope to share our skills and probably learn some new ones, over a cup of coffee ( and perhaps a biscuit!)

The first meeting of the stitching group is to take place on Thursday November 30th at the Thrapston Town Council Offices from 10 am to noon, where we can discuss a permanent venue and meeting time. It would be nice to have a "show and tell" element to our first meeting, too!

If you would like to join us, please contact

Wendy Davies 01933 623047

email: w6davies@gmail.com

BLACKWORK \* Patchwork \* Cross Stitch \* Embroidery \* Knitting \* Crochet \* Stump Work \* QUILTING

## News from the Groups

### *Theatre and Outings Group*



#### **Rockingham Castle 29 November**

Please meet in the Co-op car park at 9.15 am. On arrival at the Castle we will go directly to the tea-room where our refreshments will be served. I will be handing out your receipt on the day and this should be taken to the tearoom as proof of your refreshment option. The group will be divided, half setting off on the 11.00 am tour and the other half on the 11.15 am tour. The tour takes approximately 1 hour.

The coach will depart between 12.30 - 12.40 and we hope to be back at the Co op car park shortly after 1.00 pm.

#### **Mamma Mia – Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February (2:30pm)**

#### **Royal and Derngate Theatre, Northampton**

This is now fully booked and so our day out will include time to visit the local shops, museum, art gallery etc, and also to enjoy a spot of lunch prior to the afternoon performance.

More details to follow nearer the time.

#### **Future theatre events for 2018**

We are looking into booking two more theatre trips. These are Summer Holiday in May and War Horse later in the year. Both performances are at MK theatre and have been suggested by our loyal theatregoers.

We are always interested in your ideas and feedback. Please keep them coming!

[moira.newton@icloud.com](mailto:moira.newton@icloud.com)

[jennihall207@gmail.com](mailto:jennihall207@gmail.com)

### *Italian Conversation Group*



This group is now aimed at those with no, or just a little knowledge of the Italian language. We are following the BBC “Italianissimo” course book. Our aim is to be able to “get by” when holidaying in Italy and to understand some of the culture, cuisine and geography. We will be learning some essential grammar but we do not intend to focus on that too intently. We do not have a teacher but we will have occasional input and guidance from Italian-speaking members. We learn by books, CDs, videos and, on the lighter side, music and Italian language movies. Our aim is to keep our learning light-hearted yet meaningful. We are not in a race and are quite happy to repeat sections as often as is required to hammer the information into our poor, overworked brains.

We currently have spaces, although absolute beginners may have to attend one or two “crammer” sessions to catch up. Those with more knowledge will be able to join in with no difficulty.

We meet at my home on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday afternoon of each month from 2pm – 4pm. For more information please contact Marion.



Ciao!

Marion Healey 720 262

[marion\\_healey@msn.com](mailto:marion_healey@msn.com)





## Cycling Group

The cycling group is currently going through a resurgence with several new members joining in recent months. More importantly, we have had several ladies join the group so we have lost our “Last of the summer wine” image and are now a more balanced and vibrant group. Our last 2 rides have been away rides to Rutland and Graham waters, at around 15 and 21 miles respectively. The latter attracted 10 riders including 4 ladies and 2 electric bikes.

As the pictures show we make a colourful and friendly band with barely a sniff of Lycra between us. Does that sound a bit pervy?



Non-cyclists tend to think we cycle huge distances, but 20 miles only takes a couple of hours at a leisurely pace and there’s always a cafe stop half way with a selection of restorative snacks. Ladies, put your minds at rest—your husbands do not eat sausage sandwiches/rolls or bacon baps; honest!

We meet on the 2nd and 4th Monday mornings and welcome all-comers.

*Our next ride is on the 15th November*

*and will be a shorter local ride starting from the Woolpack inn, Islip at 10 am.*



Interested ?

Contact Frank phone : 01832735797 or 07928 747840

*“who ordered chicken in the basket?”*



## Science and Technology Group

In October one of our members Fred Shilham, organised a brilliant visit to the British Motor Museum, home to the world’s largest collection of historic British Cars; it has nearly 300 cars in its collection which span the classic, vintage and veteran eras. The Museum opened in 1993 and is situated in Gaydon, Warwickshire, in a spectacular building of art deco design.

We arrived in good time to have a cup of tea and sandwich before embarking on the first of two guided tours. The volunteers who took us round were keen enthusiasts and had worked in the local motor industry before their retirement and so their tours were real fun and informative. The first half was in the heritage part of the museum and we saw a huge range of vehicles from expedition land rovers, and a restored wooden bodied London Bus to vintage cars from the 1900s. I mustn’t forget the quirkier exhibits and the group is here proudly displayed next to Lady Penelope’s car from the Thunderbirds



The second tour was in the very new Collections Centre which houses cars from the reserve collections of the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust and the Jaguar Heritage Trust. We had a great time, finding examples of our first cars (a Ford Pop for Sheila, Austin A30 for David and a Triumph Herald for me) as well as seeing beautiful cars including Jaguars and Aston Martins. We could also see ‘behind the scenes’, an insight into how the museum stores and preserves vehicles, including restoration work underway in the workshop. At the time there were several beautiful vintage cars being prepared for the London to Brighton Rally.

## ***Science and Technology Group (continued)***

Highlight of the day was Fred explaining the workings of engines to the rest of us by pointing out the features of an MGB which had been cut in half from front to back.

We have more visits proposed including Peterborough Energy Recovery Facility and a Shoe Factory to add to our past visits to Bletchley Park and the Whittle Museum in Cambridge. Our member's talks continue this month when Neil Busby is exploring the successful and not so successful technology from the 1970s.

We meet at the Baptist Church on the third Monday of each month and could possibly squeeze in one or two more members, so please contact me Glyn Hill [glynishill06@aol.com](mailto:glynishill06@aol.com) if you are interested in joining us.



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

Chair: Sheila Underwood

Vice Chair: Viv Tunstall

Treasurer: Tricia James

Secretary: Pauline Johnson

Groups Co-ordinator: Roger Davies

Membership: Pauline Dennison

Publicity: Glynis Hill

Speaker Seeker: Paul Ollett

Newsletter Editor: Wendy Davies

Equipment Manager: Ian Byrnes

New Members Rep: Brenda Berry

## **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.**

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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