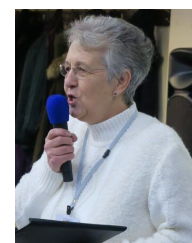




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Welcome from the Chair



Welcome to February.

The bulbs are starting to shoot and the first snowdrops are out. I always think that this shows Spring is on its way giving us something to look forward to.

This Spring will bring a lot of changes for all U3As at National level. There are new requirements regarding Data Protection and the way finances are recorded. These are legally binding and there will be support from the National U3A to guide us. We are still finding out exactly what will have to be done, so please bear with us. As soon as we understand it, we will pass the information on. For now, we have been told to carry on as usual, but the changes will come into force shortly. Fortunately we have Committee members well qualified to understand and implement any changes.

Our U3A has got the New Year off to a good start, with several new members and some new groups. I am sure we will continue to go from strength to strength and enjoy the journey.

Sheila



Exciting New Project

We have the opportunity of working with the National Trust at Lyveden on a research project this year. It will tie in with the Trust's national theme for 2018, "Women and Power," which is focused on revealing the female stories behind many of the Trust's properties. For those of you that have visited Lyveden, you will know that there is a lot of information about Sir Thomas Tresham, but what about his wife? Lady Tresham spent more time at Lyveden than her husband and yet we know little of her or the life she led.



We hope to create a resource bank focused on Muriel Tresham and the broader experience of female Catholics in Elizabethan England. We will record the primary sources we find and document the secondary information available. The National Trust will be able to use this resource to tell visitors more about the Tresham family and the experience of Elizabethan Catholics.

Sheila

Cider Maker - Philip Saxby

A brilliant sunny but frosty morning had brought out an audience of just under 120 people for the meeting on Friday 19th January 2018.

Our speaker for the meeting was Mr Philip Saxby of the hamlet of Farndish, from the family best known locally for its pork products and particularly the famous Saxby pork pie, with the well-known actor, Roger Moore, declaring his favour for the product.



With the decline of the retail pork butchery business that closed down entirely in the mid 2000's, and fed up with the vagaries that the weather brings to arable farming, Mr Saxby decided to diversify and experiment in the production of apple cider.

For the first attempts, the apples were purchased from a farmer in Hereford. However, there was a misunderstanding with regard to the collection of the fruit and Mr Saxby was dismayed to learn on arrival at the orchard that he had to harvest them from the trees himself before he could bring them home; time consuming and back-breaking work.



His first attempts with most rudimentary equipment produced a mere 700 bottles after three weeks hard graft but, undismayed, the cider was distributed and soon sold. Encouraged by this early success, Mr Saxby invested in some 'shiny new kit' to reduce some of the menial aspects of the process, although at that time apples were still being washed in a bath tub.

The output in production increased in leaps and bounds and in 2012 Mr Saxby decided to establish his own source of apples. He made his first planting of several thousand trees, mostly of cider apples, but also the more familiar Bramley variety in the appropriately named Jubilee Orchard, but it takes about 4 years before the trees produce apples in commercially viable quantities.

The production of cider has increased dramatically in the ensuing years and currently there is a bulk storage capacity in excess of 30,000 litres at the Farndish premises. The finished cider is transported to Somerset where it is bottled and labelled with the distinctive blue label adorned with the Saxby Pig company logo.

The company promotes its products, which now include fruit flavoured ciders, at prestigious country shows in a purpose made vending unit and has recently acquired a large American truck to help promote and expand the business.

Never one to stand still for long, Mr Saxby is experimenting with a fortified drink based on used sloe berries infused with gin from a local specialist gin producer, steeping them in the apple cider. This new drink has an ABV of 18% and has been creatively named 'Slider'. Samples were available for eager members of the audience to sample. I can own up to being in the queue and can confirm that it is just the job for a chilly morning, and many other occasions, I am sure.

Mr Saxby very generously gave out discount vouchers for use in his farm shop at Farndish and it appears that it is possible to make group visits by prior arrangement to the farm, with the possibility of a cider tasting afterwards.

Mr Saxby's visit and illustrated talk was well received, with many questions being asked from the floor on the finer points of craft cider. The tasting was greatly appreciated and a visit to the farm might be timely by Thrapston & District Group U3A.

Paul Ollett

Speaker Seeker

Calendar of Events 2018

- 16 February **Branch Meeting - John, Paul, George and me (Beatles) - Andy Smith.**
- 16 March **Branch Meeting - Britain through the seasons by Tom Way.**
- 23 March **Afternoon Tea - see below**
- 11 May **Greyhound Racing - see below**

Branch Meetings

When? 3rd Friday of each month
Where? The Plaza in Thrapston
When? from 10.30 to 12, (Doors open at 10am.)
Visitors are also welcome to join us for a small charge of £2



This Month — Friday February 16th

John, Paul, George and me

By Andy Smith



Celebrating the songs of three of the finest songwriters this country has ever produced. Featuring lots of their well known songs plus a few album tracks - and personal anecdotes.

Next Month - Friday March 16th

Britain through the Seasons

By Tom Way



AFTERNOON TEA

23rd March, from 2 to 4 pm at the Plaza. (doors open at 1.50)

Join us for a classic Afternoon Tea with Sandwiches, Assortment of Cakes, Cream Scones and, of course, Tea or Coffee. Tickets cost £10.

We are holding a raffle plus two competitions, which should be fun. Can all those talented...or untalented people with a sense of humour please bring along your Easter Bonnet and a Decorated Easter Egg (hard-boiled please) which will be judged by all.

Tickets will be available at the Plaza on the 16th February. Also from Viv Tunstall — phone 01832 732791.



Greyhound Meeting,

Friday May 11th

Irene Gandy has been offered the chance of filling a second coach for members who would like to attend the Greyhound meeting in Peterborough on May 11th.



The rendez-vous is the Co-Op car park in Thrapston at 6pm for a 6.15pm departure. The cost is £26, which covers travel, entry to the meeting, programme, a reserved table in the restaurant and a 2 course meal (starter and main course).

Irene will be at the Friday meeting at the Plaza in February to take ticket orders, or call her on 01832 732948.

Focus on.....The Great Outdoors

“In all things of nature, there is something of the marvellous“ Aristotle

It may still be cold out there, but thoughts of Spring may inspire us to get outdoors!

Editor

Social Forestry Group



formerly Woodland Working Party

The aim of the U3A group Social Forestry group is to help members smile from the inside, through having fun, while learning more about woodlands.

Improvements to physical fitness, self-confidence, social confidence and self-esteem have all been experienced by those who attend Social Forestry sessions and have developed deeper connections with nature and themselves.

Activities range from practical light woodland management tasks, such as bird and butterfly habitat creation, plant, bird and insect surveys, foraging and even some campfire cooking.

The group meets on two Mondays and two Wednesdays each month, throughout the year. All ages and abilities are made welcome; there's always something you can do!

Have a chat and find out more from the group leader Susan Collini on 01832 733457.



Walking Group

We meet at various locations at 10.00am on the last Thursday of the month and walk anything between 5 and 7 miles during the morning, so a reasonable level of fitness is required and, as we walk in all weathers, walking boots or shoes are advisable. If there is a café en-route then we are not averse to stopping for a cuppa and we have also been known to call in at the pub at the end of the walk. The walks are within a 20 mile radius of Thrapston and car sharing can be arranged. I email everyone the weekend before the walk to inform walkers of the proposed walk and the meeting place.

We have walked in all weathers and I think, in the 4 or so years we have been walking, we have not had to cancel because of bad weather. We've walked through bluebell woods, seen the aconites and snowdrops, heard the deer rutting (fortunately not too near us), explored some of the lovely villages in Northamptonshire and enjoyed some wonderful sunshine.



If anyone is interested in joining us you would be very welcome.

Pauline Dennison

Group Leader 07508325030

Nordic Walking

Nordic Walking with the specially designed poles enhances your natural walking experience. It is a whole body exercise for people of different levels of fitness and is ideal if you have not exercised for a while or if you are looking to shed a couple of pounds.



Whatever your age, your health can benefit from Nordic Walking :- burning 46% more calories compared to walking without poles, releasing tension in the neck and shoulders, strengthening your abdominal and back muscles, reducing the impact on the joints, especially those knees and hips.

There are two Nordic Walking groups and both groups have found it to be a very social activity, meeting different people. Tuesday is for a one hour walk from the Thrapston Sports Field, meeting at 1.50 for warm ups, setting off at 2.00 pm. If you are new to Nordic Walking you can borrow poles for a short lesson before setting off.



The second walk is on a Friday afternoon with various starting places. It usually lasts for 2hrs (approximately 5 to 6 miles). It's good to be out walking & talking. As the weather has been good over the past couple of years, we haven't had to cancel any walks, although sometimes the numbers have been a bit thin. We don't push ourselves too hard; as we all have our limits, we tend to pace with the slowest in the group.

If you would like to join us or would like more details, please contact one of us

Tuesday walk contact Polly psjohnson2710@gmail.com phone 01933 625181

Friday Walk contact Rod Brown rodbrown69@gmail.com phone 01832 732521

Gardening Group

In the Gardening Group, members try to spend as much time as possible in the 'Great Outdoors', visiting gardens of interest, both local and national, and soaking up the vitamin D !



Last year, only a few meetings were spent at home. This meant two meetings when we visited members' gardens, swapped ideas and plants and sat in the sunshine. We also had a 'Propagation Day', where we watched a DVD that gave us expert advice and then used our own cuttings to try to increase our plant stock. Our final 'at home' was our Christmas meeting with a plant quiz, mince pies and mulled wine. This year, our January meeting was a planning morning, which sees us visiting a range of gardens from February to October, with a visit to a garden centre in November and of course, the inevitable Christmas celebration in December.

It has been a learning curve, but we are getting there and enjoying the journey ! We have a few very knowledgeable members and the rest of us are just happy to learn. We have reached our quota at the moment, but would be happy to share what we have learnt over the last year with any one who would like to set up a second group (and we could share our visits with them and enjoy the discounts from larger numbers!)

Angela Gyves Group Leader



News from the Groups

Theatre and Outings Group

Outings



End of March - guided tour of **Sessions House, Northampton** (approx cost £15)

Enjoy a guided tour of Sessions House, Northampton, a very rare example of a 17th century courthouse which was one of the first new buildings put up after the great fire of 1675. The tour will include a visit to the 2 courtrooms, holding cells, a walk to the gallows, condemn cells and a look round the County Council gardens and chambers. (Places2Go did do this tour last year, but we've decided to repeat it on a weekday in the hope that more people will be able to attend)

Early June - **Saffron Walden and Audley End** (approx cost £35)

We will spend the morning in Saffron Walden, an old market town since 1141. The tourist office provides a printed Town Trail map; there is a local market and a museum. The town is also well known for its art galleries and antique shops. Bridge End gardens is a beautiful restored Victorian garden of great charm, located on the north side of the town. This includes a wonderful yew hedge maze, kitchen garden, sunken Dutch garden and visitor centre. In the afternoon we will move on to Audley End, a beautiful Jacobean house and gardens. We will have a guided tour of the house, free time to discover the gardens and hopefully time for a tea or coffee in the cafe.

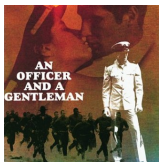
Mid-September - **Bure Valley steam railway and Norfolk Broads** (approx cost £35)

A day trip to include a journey on the Bure Valley steam railway from Aylsham in Norfolk and a 90-minute cruise on the Broads from Wroxham.

If you are interested in any of the above, please either add your name and details to the sign-up sheets at the next branch meeting on 16 February, or email Jenni to register your interest.

Theatre

Our latest trip was to see Mamma Mia at the Royal and Derngate Theatre Northampton on 1st February. We were treated to a creative and slick performance of a daughter's quest to find a missing father, told through the timeless hits of ABBA. A great musical with many humorous touches!



Our next matinee theatre trip will be 'An Officer and Gentleman' performing at the Curve Theatre, Leicester on Thursday 19th April. We have ONE remaining place left, price £29 including coach fare. Please contact Moira or Jenni if you are interested.

And finally, we've had lots of interest for a matinee performance of 'Warhorse', booked for Thursday 20th September at Milton Keynes @ £55.00 per person. There are still a few places available, so please come and sign up at the next branch meeting, or contact Moira or Jenni (see below)



Those who have already signed up and not yet paid, please remember to bring your payment at the next branch meeting. Thank you.

moira.newton@icloud.com

jennihall207@gmail.com

Science and Technology Group

Well, I thought we were going on a visit to learn about recycling, but it turned out to be even better; **Peterborough Energy Recycling Facility** is all about taking the non-recyclable rubbish from black bins and turning them into amazing things.

Twelve intrepid members of the science and technology group were keen to go even if it was just for the opportunity to get toggged up in high-vis jackets, hard hats, protective goggles and even steel capped boots.

We had a wonderfully enthusiastic guide who answered all our questions and took us on a tour. I've never seen such a high level of safety and risk warnings. Peterborough processes 85,000 tons per year and instead of going into landfill, (as we think our Thrapston waste does), it generates enough electricity for 16,000 Peterborough homes.

The ash is made into high density breeze blocks, hardcore into road surfacing and metal is recycled. I thought the best part was the huge grabber that mixed the waste, all from a single manned control room with monitors showing the heat generated in various spots. It is transferred to a hopper and then to a conveyor belt for burning. The steam propels a turbine and then the generator and hey presto, electricity. Even the waste water is cleaned and re-used.



We thoroughly enjoyed the visit.

We're planning on visiting Church's shoe factory in April and the Shuttleworth collection in July.

Glyn Hill Group leader



Christmas Event review part2

Due to technical difficulties last months newsletter did not contain a photo of the **Line Dancers**, so we are able to remedy that now. They had gone to a great deal of trouble to entertain everyone, including producing lovely costumes.



Apologies also to the **Magic Group**. Their disguises were so convincing that they were wrongly named in the newsletter last month. Just to put the record straight, it wasn't Dave who played the stunning blonde, but Pete Hales, who did wondrous things with the banana!

EVERYDAY FIRST AID ...RED CROSS COURSE



At present, we have seven members who would like to do this course. We need ten to fifteen to make it a viable group and to keep costs down. (The Red Cross provide the course free of charge but we do need to cover the cost of hiring a suitable room). I will make arrangements with the Red Cross if we get more than 10 interested members.

If you would like to join the group for the two sessions of two hours, then please let me know by February 17th.

Sheila

phone: 01832 737921.

email: Chairmanthrapstonu3a@gmail.com

Higham & Rushden u3a are running a coach trip to **Wimpole Hall** on Monday 23 April. For National Trust members it will only cost £13 for the coach with free entry to the Hall, Garden, and Rare Breed Farm. For non NT members the cost will be £13 for the coach plus £15.30 entry ticket which will cover the Hall, Garden and Rare Breed Farm. Pickup points will be Higham Ferrers at 8.45am and Skinners Hill, Rushden at 9am.

U3A members from any branch are welcome to join them, and if they have a friend who is not a u3a member but would like to go on the trip, they can sample up to two trips or group events prior to becoming a u3a member.

If anyone would like more information or to book, please contact Linda Walker on 01933 387892 or e-mail: spidar.girl@btinternet.com

Kelmarsh Hall - opportunities for volunteers

Kelmarsh Hall are holding Open Days on Tuesday 13th February and Thursday 22nd February to allow prospective volunteers to meet the Kelmarsh team and current volunteers to hear about the latest volunteering opportunities. Roles include Hall Stewards, Care of Collections, Learning and Activities, Research and Archive and Gardening Volunteers.



The Kelmarsh Trust is an independent charitable trust set up to protect and conserve the built and natural environment and to welcome visitors for enjoyment and education. If anyone wants to hear more, or pre-register their interest, please contact Eleanor Laverick, Visitor Services and Volunteer Co-ordinator

Phone: 01604686543 email: volunteer@kelmarsh.com.

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

IT Operations Manager: Neil Busby

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