



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

Newsletter  
January 2016

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### Welcome from the Chair

Hello everyone. With our waistlines expanded and our livers in recovery, we bid farewell to the festive season and enter that quiet space between January and Spring. The good news is that our U3A goes on regardless of dark days and inclement weather, providing interest groups where we continue to live, laugh and learn. With so many opportunities to get together with our friends, winter hardly matters any more. It is however, a time to keep an eye on our less-young neighbours who live alone, or even better, bring them along to U3A and give them the chance to join this wonderful organisation.

I cannot say farewell to 2015 without a few words of thanks. If you were at the Christmas Showcase, you could not fail to be impressed by the talent and dedication of the members who entertained us with language, literature, magic and music. Well done everyone. Finally, one last thank you to all those selfless people who give their time to run Thrapston and District U3A, keeping it interesting, growing and most important, relevant to our community.

Happy New Year, Frank Boydell  
Chairman.



## Forthcoming Events

Branch meetings start at 10.30am on the third Friday of each month at the Thrapston Plaza unless stated otherwise. Doors open at 10.00am when tea/coffee and biscuits are served.

- 15 January **Branch Meeting - Badgers by Brian Sanders**  
12 February **Greyhound Racing** - There are a few places left for this event. A £5 deposit will secure your place. The balance (£20) **must** be paid on or before 15 January.  
19 February **Branch Meeting - Mediaeval Medicine by Chris Carr**  
16 March **Chicago** - There are two seats available for this show. The price is £43, which includes coach fare, theatre ticket and driver's tip. For details contact Pauline 732724.  
18 March **Branch Meeting - Stanwick Handbell Ringers**  
15 March **Branch Meeting** - History of Pantomime by Delia Thomas  
20 May **Branch AGM - The Last Naval Hero. David 1st Earl Beatty by Roy Smart**  
17-June **Branch Meeting** - India on a motorcycle by Paul Ollett  
19 August **Barbecue** Group activities  
16 Sept. **Branch Meeting** - Life in the music by Andy Smith

For **Theatre Trips** you may add your name to the lists at the Branch Meetings. Pauline Dennison Tel: 01832 732724

The U3A holds several national events which may be of interest to you. Please check the U3A website ([www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)) at the events and competitions page of the Members' Area Homepage.



## News from the Groups

2015 was an eventful year for our groups! We saw several new groups start up and blossom but, sadly, lost a couple for various reasons. Among the success stories are the Cake and Bake group, the Live Music Group and Line Dancing. Other groups have recently started and are slowly building their numbers. Most groups start out small and slowly grow and evolve under their own momentum. All it takes is a few people with a common interest and one or more of them to be prepared to be the mutual contact, and to organise the time and place of the meeting, then Hey Presto! – you have a group. The person who is named as Group Leader does not have to be the fount of all knowledge on the group's theme – group members share their knowledge and expertise willingly and freely for the benefit of the rest. So if you have an interest that is not already covered – shout out! - there will be others to share it with you.

I hope you enjoyed the Christmas Showcase. What wonderful displays the groups put on and who will forget the delicious treats we ate, all produced by our very own Cake and Bake Group. On stage we had Mandy the Magician ably assisted by Glyn (Thrapston's answer to Debbie McGee) and Pete – who only was there for the coffee; then we found ourselves in a bookshop that sold only books written in Latin – who knew we had such erudite members. From there we were transported to a kitchen somewhere in Thrapston where we were invited to sit around the table and listen to the writings of the

Creative Writing group – what a treat that was. After this there was musical entertainment from the Ukulele Group and the Live Music Group. I hope you all found something to sing along to (I did see the usual suspects dancing in the aisles – you know who I mean!)

Well done all of you – it is never easy to put you or your work on show.

### **Ukelele Group - Review of 2015.**

What a great year we have had. Our members have come a long way since last year's Christmas Showcase, when a number of us had only been playing



Cake and Bake Group meets the Ukelele Group

for a few weeks – we hope you noticed the difference. Through the year we have done a few small performances; some for the U3A and one or two for other organisations and have tried to spread a little happiness. We have had nine members join our ranks this year and four leave so that makes a net profit of five. We have lots of new songs planned for 2016 and I am really excited at the prospect of learning them. We finished our year with a small party and enjoyed a Christmas Cake made by Jean. Our fun levels continue to increase exponentially with our experience and we love to share it with you, so if you have a birthday, wedding, christening, bar mitzpha etc. etc. that you think we could enliven – sing-a-longs are our speciality – give us a call. We don't charge but you might have to pay us to stop playing. Donations to charity are always welcomed as are cakes.

If all of this has inspired you to join or start up a group – give me a call or come to the next meeting at the Plaza.

Happy New Year

Marion Healey – Groups Coordinator

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### **Photography Group**

The December meeting proved to be quite hilarious as we explored the photographs from the photo shoot in November. The aim was to take close up pictures of every day items. We progressed through our images of orchids, war medals, sugar crystals, flower buds and cheese graters, dried material , dying flowers and a host of other items – (and if you are wondering what the picture was in the last newsletter, it was the finer gauge of a cheese grater!)

In the January meeting we looked at our pictures which had a theme of, 'The Essence of Christmas' or the 'Essence of Winter'. Parry talked about portraits, and techniques for taking them. Parry and myself drew the short straw and acted as models. We will review our portraits at our next meeting in February, when Parry is going to do a follow up session on group portraits.



The photography group meets at the Bowls Club on Market Road on the first Monday of the month from around 10.30 to 12 noon. The only thing you need is a camera of any description and an interest in taking photos. If you are new to photography and you think this could be an interesting hobby for you, or you would like some help in using your camera, then do get in touch with Ann Carter on 01832 358625 or Parry Jones on 01832 732668.

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Who is guarding the guardians of the cakes?

Tea and coffee for the ravenging hordes.



Cakes and biscuits by Cake and Bake



Tai Chi and Flower Arranging



Photography Group continued. We are happy to assist in addition to the monthly meetings.

The meetings are fun, with a serious side of making the most of our cameras and sharing the results with other group members.

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Lace making



More Cake and Bake

### **U3A Membership Benefits and Events**

#### **1. National Legal Helpline**

This may be new to some of you, but there is a free legal help line service for U3A members which is operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Helpline is staffed by a dedicated team of legal advisors who are divided into specialist teams. The Helpline is run by Arc Legal Assistance in partnership with Irwin Mitchell Solicitors, so there is access to the right expert, even for complex queries. The service offers a level of expertise over and above the service which most legal help lines are able to provide.

To access the Legal Helpline, please call 0344 770 1040 and quote U3A Legal Helpline when requested

#### **2. National and Regional Summer schools**

The U3A organises events at a regional and national level in which all U3A members are invited to participate. The National Summer School is held at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, Gloucestershire during the weeks of 8-11 August 2016 and 15-18 August 2016. There is a wide range of topics and the residential cost is £285 ensuite.

The East Midlands Regional Summer School is Nottingham Trent University, Brackenhurst Campus, Southwell, Nottinghamshire. The dates are from 16-19 August

and the cost is £225 ensuite.

If you contact the National Office, they will send you a brochure of the events in hard copy. The phone number for the office is phone 020 8466 6139 or you can visit the U3A website: [u3a.org.uk](http://u3a.org.uk).

If you use the internet route, then you will need to go to membership log in and open an account. (This has nothing to do with money!) It is just a case of registering a user name and a password, which enables you to log onto the membership page. Once you are on the page, go to Events which is in the bottom right hand corner. There are also other sections on the page that may be of interest to you and members can access this web site once they have registered.

Open University **free** courses

These courses are open and free to everyone, as well as U3A members. If you would like to do something different this year, we would suggest that you explore the Open University web site:

[www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses](http://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses).

(You may be able to access it by typing in 'Free Courses Open University'.) There are hundreds of different courses on an amazing range of subjects, which are of different durations. They are free and all you need to do is to enrol.

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## Cruise the Danube to Vienna and Budapest

14 August 2016 for 10 days

**Included** in the price are:

Executive return coach travel

Return ferry crossing

All accommodation

Full board during the cruise

En-suite cabin accommodation aboard the MS Serenity.

Visits to Passau, Melk, Vienna, Budapest, Bratislava, and Durnstein.

All listed excursions.

All cabin sizes are the same but the price will determine the deck level of the cabin.

Main deck £1244

Middle deck £1394

Panorama deck £1544

**Not included.** Your own personal insurance.

Booking forms will be available at the January meeting to be returned on or before February meeting with £150 deposit.

There will be a coffee morning before the February meeting so that any singles who wish to share a cabin can meet and arrange their accommodation.

Contact Brenda on 01832 730225 or Michele on 01933 623668 for any queries. Information packs are available at the January meeting.

### Thrapston and District U3A Committee

Chair: Frank Boydell

Treasurer: Tricia James

Group Co-ordinator: Marion Healey

Publicity: Ann Carter

Social Media: Rachel Thompson

Website: Neil Busby

Vice-Chair: Michelle Collison

Secretary: Guinette Davis

Membership: Madeline Fisher

Speaker Seeker: Bryan Elliott

Editor: Parry Jones

Member: Vacant

**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.

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