



Thrapston & District



Newsletter

March 2017

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Welcome from the Chair

Just in case you're suffering from amnesia, we have an Open Day on 6 May and our AGM on 19 May. How could you forget?

The open day will be a big undertaking. Since many of the Committee are also Group Leaders, organisers, entertainers and much more, they can't do everything and we need volunteers to help run the event. Can **you** give some time to help run the Open Day? We need people to help set up and clear up the hall, welcome visitors, serve refreshments, hand out leaflets and information - and those are just the things I can think of off the top of my head. Please contact Sheila Underwood - Vice Chairman - at vicechairthrapstonu3a@gmail.com, or phone: 01832 737921. This is your U3A, be proud and help us show it off.

With the AGM approaching and members of the Committee needing replacing, I have been appealing, with some success, for volunteers. Thank you to all those who have accepted the challenge, you will be looked after and made very welcome. However, no men have come forward. Come on guys, with a lifetime of knowledge, skills and experience; are you really afraid of a little committee? For balance, the committee needs representation from both sexes.

I know joining the Committee can feel like a huge step to take and many who would join are worried that they don't know enough about the U3A. To ease people in, I would like to offer the chance to shadow members of the committee, providing assistance and learning as you go, with a view to joining in 2018. If you would like an apprenticeship with Thrapston U3A, please contact me. Come on, pick up the phone.

Enjoy your Newsletter.

Frank Boydell, Chairman

Tel: 01832 735797 Email: chairmanthrapstonu3a@gmail.com

Forthcoming Events

- 17 March **Branch Meeting - MBE, Investiture at Buckingham Palace by Guinette Davies**
- 21 April **Branch Meeting - Kicks & Frills, the Story of the Can-Can by David Price**
- 19 May **Annual General Meeting, plus Along the Nene by Martin Izzard-BEM**
- 16 June **Branch Meeting - School Holiday Fiascos by Mike Leonard**
- 21 July **Branch Meeting - Amy Johnson by Roy Smart**
- 18 August **U3A Summer Events (details to be advised)**
- 15 Sept. **Branch Meeting - Rockingham Castle - 950 years of history by Patricia Woods**
- 20 October **Branch Meeting - The Plague Doctor by David Bell**
- 17 Nov. **Branch Meeting - Day in the life of TV Licence enforcement officer by Mike Long**
- 15 December **U3A Yuletide Event (details to be advised)**
- 2018
- 19 January **Branch Meeting - Tales from the Cornerfield Apiary by Freddie Harris**
- 20 April **Branch Meeting - You cannot be serious - tales from the Centre Court at Wimbledon by Alan Gray MBE**

Life with my father – Gail Stuart

What a treat we had at the Friday meeting in February for the membership when we were visited by Mrs Gail Stuart who delivered a very interesting talk on her experiences growing up with her father Eric Morecambe of Morecambe and Wise fame.

Eric and Ernie could certainly pack 'em in and Gail did very well too with the Plaza at almost capacity to regale us for an hour with anecdotes from her childhood and life with her high profile showbiz dad. Apparently it was not always fun as Eric was a bit inclined to embarrass his offspring.

Gail also paid tribute to her former beauty queen mother who was at times able to apply some control to Eric to maintain some sanity into the household.

Gail gave us a lot of insight to growing up in her special environment with her father's at times zany behaviour. She displayed a fascinating collection of photographs of show business personalities who were the peers of Eric and some greetings cards that were from her own considerable talents as a water colour artist.

Eric was held in great affection by his audiences and Gail's easy style of delivery was a delight to listen too. She was delighted to autograph any purchases made from her modest stock and it was sad for us when her presentation concluded but very rewarding to have met such a delightful person.

The Perils of Pauline (and Doris)

Tomasz Schafernaker was rubbing his hands with glee as he delivered the weather forecast on 23 February as the Jet Stream was gathering its full force to 'swallow' an area of low pressure leading to what is termed a 'Weather Bomb'. In layman's terms this means rain squalls, snow and gale force winds into the bargain.

For Pauline and her merry band of ramblers this didn't amount to more than a mere bagatelle and as we her motley crew gathered at Ashton Green the wind was strengthening to show just who was boss. The thatchers preparing to work on a nearby cottage had abandoned the idea already.

There were eight of us and one small dog in the walking group that set off on a 6 mile circuit on the promise of enjoying an early show of snowdrops and yellow aconites on the route, the real harbingers of Spring. There was a bit of a clue of what was to come as we skipped across the Oundle bypass noticing a fallen tree halfway across the main road.

Threading our way through the residential streets of Oundle in close order we soon gained the field paths heading roughly North towards Cotterstock. A tail wind and a slippery field edge were enough to contend with and the noise was incredible as the wind tore through the tops of the tall trees at the field edge sounding like a jet plane. At Cotterstock we were rewarded with glimpses of the promised flowers but also a huge fir tree had snapped and fallen across the road. Men in construction helmets were preparing to clear the tree away. Further on another man also helmeted advised us to watch where we were going as large boughs of dead wood fell from the trees at the wayside leaving debris strewn across the road.

The River Nene had waves fit for surfing seen as we crossed the bridge out of the village soon to cross the road to enter a bridleway at the aptly named Crossing Cottage then through a field, the domain of a fearsome looking long horn bull and Doris roaring into our right ears.

So far so good, no fallers and not much rain really but the wind speed was rising and gusting ever more strongly. In spite of all this we were making good progress and Ashton was almost in sight but Doris still had an ace up her sleeve. Rain! Not ordinary rain of course but the horizontal variety as everything was thrown at us including seemingly the kitchen sink.

The little dog had definitely had enough and skulked close to the hedge bottom for whatever shelter was to be had down there whilst we battled on eventually arriving back to the sanctuary of or cars parked at Ashton, or for some the welcome to be found behind the doors of the Chequered Skipper.

Well done Pauline, you counted us all out and you counted us all back to coin a phrase, (although I may have heard that somewhere else)? Sodden and muddied but unbowed. Oh and the flowers were beautiful. As for Doris? Well she just blew herself out.

Photographs

There is a request for photographs of U3A activities, whether it be of people, places or things. The Thrapston and District U3A website and the FaceBook pages need more up-to-date photographs. Send them to Rachel <rachelk@uwclub.net>.

P.S. Don't forget the newsletter editor would also like photographs for publication in the newsletter.

Funny Girl

To describe something as a real treat may occasionally seem to be somewhat over the top but on 2nd March 2017 the Theatre Goers Group were entertained to such an outing.

Having boarded the comfortable coach at 11.30am in Sackville Street we were quickly whisked to Milton Keynes in about 50 minutes. Pauline Dennison had arranged, with her customary attention to fine detail, a visit to the Milton Keynes Theatre for the matinee production of Funny Girl. The theatre is located close to the shopping centre at Milton Keynes and there are a selection of eating houses in the immediate vicinity to satisfy one's appetite before the performance began at 2.30pm.

The theatre was filled to capacity for this popular comedy and at times dramatic musical, with the role of Fanny Brice, made famous by Barbara Streisland in the 1964 film, brought to life by an actress of our times Sheridan Smith. Sheridan describes the role in the following manner – **'Fanny was bold, funny, quirky and strong, especially for her time. It's so interesting to play her'**. There was no doubt about Sheridan's talent and enthusiasm for the part and she performed familiar songs such as 'Don't Rain on my Parade', 'People who need People' along with many other songs, with her equally gifted co-stars. The chorus line was as glamorous as ever with even ballet scenes amongst the knock-about humour which was the trademark of Fanny Brice in her prime during the early part of the 20th century.

It was indeed a real treat to have seen the show and by 5.30pm we were back on the coach for our return journey. The chatter on the coach as people relived their favourite parts of the performance gave testimony to the fact that all appeared to have enjoyed Funny Girl just as much as my wife and I had, and I look forward to similar excursions in the future.

Thank you Pauline, very much appreciated.

Paul Ollett

Numbers are limited to **20** and a donation of £2.00 per person would be appreciated- this goes to the Thrapston Heritage funds. Sign up at the **March** meeting or telephone Brenda telephone 730255.

PLACES2GO - Saturday 25 March - Seaside day - free. Meet at Thrapston Co-op outer car park 09:00. car-sharing available.

Sunday 30 July - Rutland Belle cruise £9pp.

The Thrapston and District U3A Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The AGM will be held on Friday 19 May starting at 10:30am. It is hoped to keep this as short as possible and will be followed by **Martin Izzard BEM** giving a talk entitled '**Along the Nene**'.

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

Flower Arranging Group - We are once again trying to form a group and will be meeting at 1430 on Tuesday April 4th at 1 Highfield Rd Thrapston.

If you are interested please contact <linannvic2000@yahoo.co.uk> or 01933 380244 for further details. Linda

Military History - On 13 March Jim Hancock gave a very interesting and amusing anecdotal talk on his days as a schoolboy and Boy Scout evacuee in Seaford, Kent during the early part of World War II.

On 10 April David Turner will talk on aspects of the Burma Campaign.

There are one or two vacancies in the Military History Group who meet ten times a year to receive a talk on any of the many and varied subjects relating to military history. The range of previous talks has been very wide and all have been interesting.

Should you wish to know more or join this group please contact Gerry Martin on phone 01832 731174 or email <gerrymartin1@waitrose.com>

Thrapston and District U3A Committee

Chair: Frank Boydell

Vice-Chair: Sheila Underwood

Treasurer: Tricia James

Secretary: Guinette Davis

Groups Co-ordinator: Marion Healey

Membership: Madeline Fisher

Publicity: Ann Carter

Speaker Seeker: Paul Ollett

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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Website www.thrapstonu3a.co.uk where committee contact details may be found

Groups Report

We are currently having a very lively time with our groups. It seems that many people were impressed by, or heard about, our Christmas Event and came along to our January meeting. There, fired up by enthusiasm, members new and old were signing up for groups all morning. Absolutely marvellous! Following this some of our embryonic groups are now ready to run or are already running. All of these newer groups are eager for new members to join. We also held a new members meeting to welcome our newest recruits. This resulted in another new group* being suggested and four names already on the sign-up sheet. I can't wait to see what happens next.

New Groups starting or about to start are:

Fork to Fork Singing for Pleasure

Spanish

***Italian Conversation** - this suggested new group already has seven members signed on in just a week!

Classical Music II - Due to the success of the first Classical Music group, it has been decided to launch a second group to meet on the third Wednesday morning of each month. Glyn Hill is willing to help get the group started but would then like to pass the group onto another leader. If you are interested please contact Glyn (see Classical Music listing) or me as below.

Open Groups To save confusion, I will explain these groups. Open Groups e.g. **Theatre Trips, Places-to-Go, History Walks et cetera**, do not have a fixed membership. They organise their activities on an ad hoc basis. These activities will always be publicised in the newsletter and at monthly meetings, where details of how to enlist and the costs involved will be explained. The organisers of these activities will not contact individual members as a matter of course so the onus is on you to book in as soon as you are able, to avoid disappointment. We like to think there is something for everyone in our U3A but if there is some activity you would like to do please let us know and we will do our best to enable a group to be formed.

To find out more about, or to sign-up for any of the above groups or any other activity contact me Marion Healey, <groupsthrapstonu3a@gmail.com> - 01832 720262

If I am not available, contact Pauline Johnson on repthrapstonU3a@gmail.com, or any other committee member who will be pleased to help.

Local History Walks

The first event of this year is the next in the series of Thrapston Walks. Meet at the Sports Centre (near the ENDC offices) on **Tuesday 18 April at 1.30pm.**