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As we approach Christmas with all its treats followed swiftly by the New Year I tend to look back at the past twelve months to reflect upon the highs and lows we have experienced in our u3a.

There is much to be pleased about by the support we have from the members of Thrapston & District Group u3a in the group activities and the special events throughout the year. Our Open Day on 6th April and our stand at The Charter Fair in June helped to raise our profile and we continue to attract new members with our current membership having risen to 275, a special tribute to our Publicity Officer Glyn Hill's tireless efforts.

There have been challenges and sad times for whatever reason and said goodbye to some. The overall impression I have though is that there are more reasons to be cheerful. Seeing the happy faces at our monthly Plaza meetings is most rewarding. We have in the past twelve months enjoyed the presentations of excellent Speakers and there are more talented individuals in 2025. Our Speaker Seeker is doing an excellent job.

We would like to see an increase in the number of groups and greater support for the leaders of existing groups. The core ethos of the u3a movement is the promotion of education and help for the members from the vast banks of knowledge already present within our membership.

Our AGM is in May when some of the committee members will stand down including myself. We must prepare for this and encourage new members to join our committee.

Preparations have been in progress for months with our own Fairies and Elves striving to ensure that our Christmas party at The Plaza on 13th December is the usual cheerful affair. The tickets are virtually all gone but if you haven't got one it's always worth asking in case there are returns. It is a great regret that I am unable to attend this year as the date clashes with my holiday



Many thanks to you all for your support this year. Personally, and on behalf of the committee members I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Peaceful year throughout 2025.





The Christmas Event 2024

13th December at the Plaza, Thrapston

Doors open at 10.30

Don't forget to dress for the event,
Wear your Christmas jumper and Santa Hat

Polly on behalf of the Social Group

Telephone: 07867 573219 or Email: psjohnson2710@gmail.com



Monthly Meeting

17th January 2025

Doors open @ 10:00 am.— Presentation starts @ 10:30 am



The Great American Songbook.

17th January 2025 : Speaker Roger Browne

Roger Browne is a professional raconteur, writer, director and pianist. He has appeared in jazz clubs and jazz festivals in the UK, Ireland, Germany, Norway, The Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland and across North America and Canada, and provided piano accompaniment for many national and international legends such as Stefane Grappelli, Marion Montgomery, Wild Bill Davison, Scott Hamilton, Ray Nance, Bud Freeman, Humphrey Lyttleton, George Melly, George Chisholm, and many more.



*Thrapston's lakes and the Nene Valley,
through the seasons.*

15 November 2024: Speaker Collin Bloor.

November's talk was by one of our very own members, Colin Bloor. Colin is an outstanding photographer who treated us to the most stunning images of the flora and fauna of our local area through the seasons. These photos were backed up by Colin's extensive knowledge of his subjects: when they came and where from, how common are they, how their numbers are holding up, or not. Information to educate and inspire us all.



The majority of Colin's photos were taken along the river Nene and the Thrapston Town Walk. This is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), monitored and controlled by Natural England. How many of us have strolled along the Town Walk and missed what is there, if we only took the time to look and listen? The presentation made us realise just how lucky we are to have so much of nature's bounty right here on our doorstep. I hope the audience were inspired to take a walk and see for themselves.

Thank you, Colin, for sharing your images and knowledge with us.

Frank





A Christmas Story by Keith Brownsea

What's in a Name?

“ Time to come in and get ready for bed Christopher dear “ called his mother. “ OK Mum” said Christopher.

To be honest, he had been out all day playing with his friends and was getting sleepy anyway. What he wasn't so happy about was that he didn't really like the name Christopher, because it was too long, but what really annoyed him most of all was that he felt a lot more important than just a deer, especially as his Dad had huge antlers! He loved his Mum and Dad very much but, somehow, he didn't manage to talk to them about what was bothering him.

The next day he decided to talk with his friends about the problem. He first saw Al the owl who lives at Tree House, just down the road from Christopher. He told Al about not liking the name Christopher but Al just laughed. “ It's not funny! “ said Christopher, stamping his foot.

Al stopped laughing and said “ My full name is Algernon” to which Christopher replied “ Wow, that's worse than my name.” Al said “ I agree with you, so I shortened it to Al and that's what everybody calls me. “ “ That's really interesting” said Christopher. “ Thanks very much. See you later.”

Christopher then ran to Cave Road to see Bart the bear cub. After they had played tag in the garden for a while, Christopher decided to also tell Bart about not liking his name. Much to Christopher's surprise, Bart fell about laughing, which was the same as Al's reaction. “ It's not funny! “ said Christopher, stamping two feet.

Bart found it hard to stop laughing but eventually said “ My full name is really Bartholomew “ and Christopher gasped “ That's even worse than my name. “ Bart said “ I couldn't agree with you more, so I shortened it to Bart and that's what everyone calls me. “ “ Thanks very much “ said Christopher, as he was beginning to see a possible solution to one of his problems. “ See you later.”

He ran off into the woods to find his best friend, Zak the zebra. “ Morning “ said Zak. “ Although, looking at the puzzled look on your face, perhaps not a good one. What's the matter? “ Christopher explained that he didn't like his name and Zak rolled on the ground laughing, with tears streaming down his face. “ It's not funny! “ said Christopher, stamping three feet and almost falling over. Zak managed to pull himself together and said “ My full name is Zachariah “ to which Christopher exclaimed “ No way! That's even worse than my name! “

“ I couldn't agree with you more “ said Zak “ so I shortened it to Zak and that's what everybody calls me. Mum and Dad said that they didn't mind at all. “ “ So would I be able to shorten my name to Christ?” said Christopher. Zak laughed and said “ I think Chris might be a better choice. “ “ Chris – yes, that's what I want to be called “ said Christopher, excitedly. “ I'll go home to tell Mum and Dad.” “ See you later Chris “ said Zak.

Christopher raced home and, as it wasn't yet dinnertime, Mum and Dad were a bit surprised to see him. “ Everything OK?” said Mum. “ I thought I had a problem” said Christopher “ but, with the help of my friends, think that I have the perfect answer. Will it be alright if everybody now calls me Chris and not Christopher? “

Continued on next page



His parents smiled and said “ Of course Chris dear. We always thought that you would want to shorten it anyway. “ Mum said “ It’s your birthday next week, 25th December, why don’t we tell everybody that you will be called Chris from that date? “

“ Brilliant, that will be a great present! “ said Christopher.(soon to be Chris.)

His birthday arrived and when he came into the kitchen his Mum said “ Happy birthday Chris dear. “Dad looked at Chris and thought he still didn’t seem quite as happy as he should be on his birthday, particularly as there would be presents and a party with his friends. “ “ Are you OK, Chris dear? “ said Dad.

Chris looked even more sad. He told them that it was great to have his name shortened to Chris but there was one other thing bothering him. “ Tell us what it is” said Dad “ and I’m sure that we will be able to help.”“Well Dad “ said Chris “ you and Mum keep calling me ‘dear’ and I thought, especially with your big antlers Dad, that I might be a bit more than just a deer! ““ Oh dear “ smiled his Mum. “ We call you ‘dear’ because you are precious to us but you are not a ‘deer’. ““ Now I am totally confused “ said Chris.“ Deer – spelt D-E-E-R – are much smaller animals than us “ said Dad. “ You are not a deer – you are a moose. “

It’s the 25th December, Chris has shortened his name and found out that he is not a deer. Do you know what this makes him?

HAPPY CHRIS MOOSE!!!!

HAPPY CHRIS MOOSE EVERYBODY.



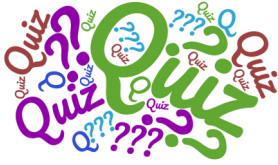
The Garden Groups yearly visit to Gates Garden Centre

What a lovely day we had ! Fabulous decorations to see , lovely lunch and company , and , oh yes we did buy a plant or two !

The Garden Group are a friendly lot , we get together monthly on the second Wednesday and vary meetings with visits to gardens big and small, Garden Centres and occasional meetings at members homes and gardens .

Contact Angela on 01832 279479 .if you would like to join us





THRAPSTON'S MAYOR'S QUIZ NIGHT

THE PLAZA - 25th January 2025

Saturday evening 7.00 for 7.30

Teams of 4-6 Our U3A has reserved 16 places (of which 12 are already taken)

£10 PER PERSON (PAYMENT IN ADVANCE)

Includes the following meal options :-

FISH & CHIPS, SAUSAGE & CHIPS OR CHEESE CROQUETTE & CHIPS

TO RESERVE YOUR PLACE EMAIL: CHAIRMANTHRAPSTONU3A@GMAIL.COM

PREVENTION



Police Anti-Fraud Talk

We have been approached by the Police Fraud Prevention Officer who is offering a free talk lasting about 40 minutes on personal protection against scammers and those who would try to steal our information and assets.

Please let me know if you are interested and if there are enough, we will arrange a meeting at which you may learn what to look out for and how to protect your interests. Always remember that if what is offered seems too good to be true then it's probably no good at all.

Paul Ollett - Chairman Thrapston u3a



Move & Groove with Janet Oldham

Please note that the last date for my exercise class before Xmas is Monday 9th December, resuming after the New Year on Monday 6th January 2025

For those of you that haven't been before why not give it a try and come and join me for some gentle exercises to popular music. Classes are held every Monday starting at 10:30 am at the Islip Village Hall

If you would like to know more please contact me 07931 712056.

Janet

DECEMBER

Chill December brings the sleet,

Blazing fire and Christmas Treat .- Sara Coleridge

December is the twelfth month but the tenth in the Roman Calendar . Its name derives from the latin 'decem' meaning ten .

Notable December Dates

1ST December -World Aids Day

6TH December-Feast of St. Nicholas

7th December -Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour

21ST/22ND December The Winter Solstice

24th December Christmas Eve

25th December Christmas Day / Hanukkah begins 2024

26th December St. Stephens Day /Boxing Day

31stDecember New Years Eve

December Birth Stones -Blue Topaz , Turquoise

December Flower – Holly , Poinsettia

December Star Signs -Sagittarius, Capricorn



Thrapston & District u3a – Membership

John Tinniswood passed away recently at the age of 112 years. Although his name possibly would not have been familiar to most he will be remembered at his passing as the world's oldest man.

John had been retired for 54 years and spent the final years of this very long life in a care home surrounded with all those royal greetings cards he had received down the years.

In the BBC news report, there was a snippet of video where he was tucking into Fish & Chips, apparently a favourite meal for him. Inevitably someone asked him what did he attribute his long-life span to and he answered with “moderation in what you do, don't over eat and exercise not just the body but the mind”.

I don't know if John was a member of any u3a group but his pearls of wisdom are something we could all adopt.

Our membership has risen to 275 paid up members which is a net gain of 29 on this time last year. It is a remarkable achievement and so much is offered by our u3a to 'exercise our minds as well as our bodies'. Embrace the opportunities and live long and happy lives. *Paul*

Butterfly & Birdwatching at Summer Leys 6th November

The weather at Summer Leys reserve on Wednesday morning was dull and damp with hardly a breath of wind. We made our way to the first bird hide with high hopes of seeing a good variety of birds and we were not disappointed.

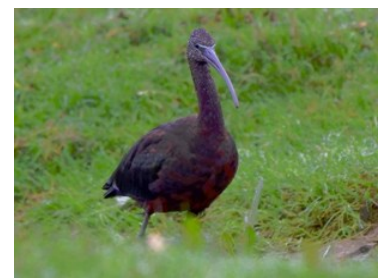
The hides give great views across the lake and many birds were on the water including Small Egrets, Shoveller ducks, Swans, Herons, Gadwall and Tufted ducks, mallards and Coots. A Great Egret (Great White Heron) was fishing far across the water and snapped up a sizeable Pike which it quickly swallowed, Paul and Colin managed to get some good photos of this.



Great Egret



Great Egret



Glossy Ibis

After a while we moved on to the next hide which gave a good view of the far end of lake, once again there were many species on the water including a flock of Sandpipers and a number of Snipes amongst the many Gulls. We were also lucky to see a Glossy Ibis with its burgundy plumage wade along the water filled ditch in front of the hide, this is very rare migrant to the UK and great to see it so close.

We carried on for a quick look at the bird feeders hide but it was quite quiet with just a few Blue and Great Tits on the bird feeders, there was a family of rats feeding on the dropped seed and they were not at all bothered by our presence.



Time to go home after a lovely walk at a wonderful place and cannot wait to go back. Many thanks to Colin and Paul for their photos and also for Colin's help with the bird identification.

Bob Simpson



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 2023/2024

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Off Committee Role 2024/2025

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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 last day of the month.

Editor and publisher : Tina Jones - email: editorthrapstonu3a@gmail.com

Website : www.thrapstonu3a.co.uk where details of the committee and their roles can be found along with details of all the groups.

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