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Chairman's New Year Message 2025



With Christmas 2024 behind us I hope that you all enjoyed the good things customary at this most festive time of year. Unfortunately, I could not be with you to share in the fun and games at the Plaza Christmas Party. By all accounts it was a real hoot as was readily apparent in the photographs I have seen since. These things do not happen by chance and we are indebted to our creative and diligent Elves and Fairies in the preparation and presentation of the festivities. A big thankyou to them from all of us.

I spent much of December in Australia visiting my daughter and her family who live in Adelaide. Now I am back and like many in our u3a, really looking forward to meeting the challenges that 2025 will inevitably bring. Time is such a precious commodity and whatever our allotted span we must make the most of it.

Anyone who has flown long haul will know there is little to do on an aeroplane and I turned to the 'in flight' entertainment to while away the hours. By chance I happened upon a TV series presented by the late and lamented Dr Michael Mosely. The programme focused on arresting the ageing process that affects us all. Laboratory tests were undertaken to demonstrate the human brain benefits enormously from being exercised. Participants were asked to undertake three different learning challenges in topics unfamiliar to them such as artistic painting, learning a language or operating personal computers. After 12 weeks they were again tested for memory ability and in every case the memory had improved significantly above the original results.

Our u3a offers opportunities for members to try new things and exercise our brains as well as meeting new friends in a cheerful environment and I would urge you as you recline amid the wreckage of your New Year Resolutions to try something different and challenge yourself, you will be surprised how much it will add to your life.

Personally, and on behalf of the whole committee of Thrapston & District Group u3a I wish you a Happy New Year in which you will "live, learn & laugh". **Paul**



Monthly Meetings

17th January & 21 February 2025

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



The Great American Songbook.

17th January 2025: Speaker Roger Browne

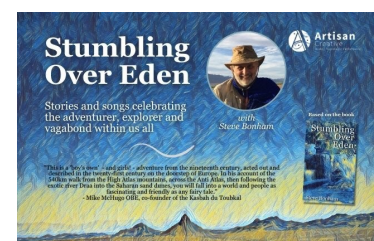
Roger Browne is a professional raconteur, writer, director and pianist. He has appeared in jazz clubs and jazz festivals in the UK, Ireland, Germany, Norway, The Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland and across North America and Canada, and provided piano accompaniment for many national and international 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.



Stumbling Over Eden.

21st February 2025 : Speaker Steve Bonham

Following the narrative of a DIY trek from the top of the High Atlas Mountains to the Sahara Desert (550 km), Steve Bonham reflects on the nature of adventure and its rewards weaving in themes of risk-taking, serendipity and companionship. This is a celebration in story, bold ideas and song of the adventurer that lies within us all and invites us to see "beyond the adrenaline high" the true experience of stepping into the unknown and how to make a friend of uncertainty.



Christmas Party 2024



It is hoped that you all had a good Christmas and I wish you a Happy New Year .

The Christmas event was once again a success, the Radio Pantomime was a real success thanks to all the members that took part. The 'ploughman's' lunch went very well with some delightful food again, I hope you all enjoyed it.

I particularly enjoyed the Christmas Carols at the end, thanks to Frank for his hard work ensuring the music and sound system worked. We had a spectacular raffle with over a dozen prizes.

My thanks go to the Social Group that I work with to make sure this event and the August lunch happen. We have a wonderful group spirit that means we meet up just to make these events work each year. Many thanks to you all for your support this year and look forward to 2025.....Polly





My Story – Colin Northern



I was born in 1956 and have a younger sister Pat. We grew up in Coates, Cambs. I was a bit of a ruffian as a teenager and never really excelled at anything, but I did name a street in my village in a competition and got a geography 'O' level. I was taken under the wing of a Judo instructor and learned Judo and some discipline in life. I was also a keen boxer and knocked out at the time the county junior champion. I was also keen at Athletics and trained alongside the late great Jeff Capes.

I then got an apprenticeship in engineering at Bennie Lifts and studied at Peterborough Tech College and passed with distinction my Advanced City & Guilds in Engineering. I was still a bad boy at heart and had a motorbike, joining a 'renowned' biker gang, where I was fortunate not to end up in jail! Losing my dad changed my behaviour.

I changed jobs as a Centre Lathe Turner with London Brick and finally ended up being a Horizontal Borer/Chargehand/Health & Safety Officer/Senior Shop Steward with 44 years service.

I got married in 1979 and had three children a boy and two girls. But sadly lost my eldest Teresa to a brain tumour aged 6. This inspired me to raise money for the Neuroblastoma Society. My marriage did not survive the trauma of losing a child.

While I was married I had my own Disco and played at events as big as Kings College. I moved to Whittlesey and I took up Tang Soo Do and reached a high grade before injury stopped me. I was also a keen match angler reaching the Division 1 with the Yaxley match squad.

I met my now lovely wife Irene in 2004. We have travelled all over on a Harley Davidson especially along the Pacific Highway in USA and I became the Chairman of The Anglia Region Harley Davidson Riders Club which led to many raucous rally weekends! I also was co-founder of Whittlesea Motorcycle Club.

I retired in 2021, moved to Clopton and still ride motorcycles. I now have three grandchildren. For 11 years I was a Vice Chairman of the Eastern counties Tai Chi Academy and 4 years as a Tai Chi Instructor with The Concept Academy of Tai Chi. I have organised the Thrapston U3a Group for the last 3 years but sadly can only advise now due to injury.





Thrapston U3A Tai Chi/Sabre Group Christmas dinner at The Woolpack pub in Islip.

A big thank you to my 2 assistant instructors Frank Boydell and Andrew Eldred and all our group members for making our Tai Chi class so successful in 2024.

Colin Northern

FLOWER BUNCH Our Xmas project

We meet monthly with a different themein November we planned to try and make our own willow wreaths.

Starting with cutting willow ourselves, from a local source, soaking and shaping, all with no previous experience.

On a damp day outside in November we had great fun and with a little cursing and muttering we all produced a roundish shaped usable wreath... Many thanks to U Tube !

Early the following month we decorated the wreaths with holly, evergreens, berries etc ready to be used at Xmas.

Congratulations to all of us they were great !

We produce simple flower arrangements, visit gardens and demo"s.

In January we will be planning for 2025 we have room for a few new members. No previous experience needed !!

If you are interested please contact:-

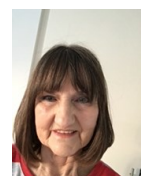
[Linda 01833 380244](tel:01833380244) or linannvicc2000@yahoo.co.uk

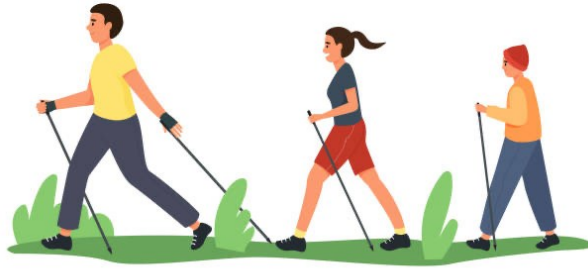


Your Stories

Everyone has a story to tell. The ones so far I think you will agree have made interesting reading and been fascinating. This just shows that you don't really know much about the people you may be sitting next to at the plaza meetings or in the group that you have joined. I am looking for more people to come forward with their story. Who will be my next ? If nobody comes forward for February onwards this feature may unfortunately be discontinued.

I'm Kelly and would love to hear from you. Please telephone me for a chat on 07718386330 or speak to me at one of the plaza meetings,





Nordic Walking

The Nordic Walking group meets every Tuesday for a one hour walk, due to the short time it is always local, around the Thrapston or Islip area. We meet at the corner of Green Lane and Meadow Lane, near the Thrapston Sports Field, at 1.50 for warm ups, setting off at 2.00 pm.

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.

Whatever your age your health can benefit from Nordic Walking:- burning 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

It's a very social activity, walking & talking and as the weather is usually good we rarely cancel a walk. We don't push ourselves too hard as we all have our limits, we tend to set the pace with the slowest in the group.

If you are new to Nordic Walking you can borrow poles to try it out. If you would like to join us or would like more details please contact:-

Polly psjohnson2710@gmail.com Telephone: 07867 573219

free

Who doesn't love a bargain?

We hear it all the time. A Grand Sale with ££££ of discount! Clubcard price!! Special offers for this and that! Buy one get one free! It seems endless and we love to save as we spend.

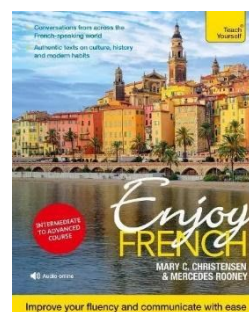
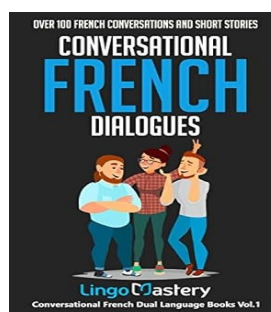
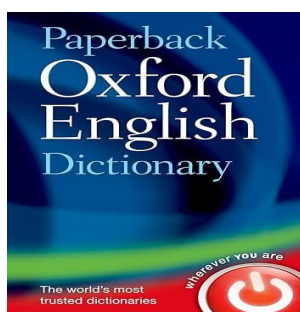
Our u3a, ever at the forefront for excellent value did not want to be left out of providing such opportunities. For our Plaza Meeting on 17th January 2025, we have embarked on an experiment to attract more members to join us with an innovative idea '**Bring a Friend for Free**' Yes that's it, you heard it right.

The meeting will start at 10.30am but the doors are open as usual from 10.00 so just turn up with a friend and they can come in as your guest for free, to enjoy one of the best mornings they will ever have for absolutely no charge at all. What is more they will thankyou afterwards for inviting them along.

U3A spotlight

Activity groups: Languages

Glyn James runs English on the first Wednesday afternoon in each month. Jan Pacey leads French Encore on the first and third Thursday mornings and Roger Davies leads our French Revivers group on the second and fourth Wednesdays. We don't at present have a beginner's group but if you would like to volunteer to set up a new French group, you will be welcomed with open arms.



ENGLISH – Glyn James

Our language has been developing for over a thousand years, influenced by many factors including Latin, the Vikings and the Norman Conquest. Even in our own lifetimes, words have disappeared or changed their meaning and new ones have been added. It is fascinating to look at how changes come about, why words are misused or grammar misunderstood - and anyway how we can agree on what is right or wrong, since fashion (a big influence on language) moves on. Not just Shakespeare and the Bible but other great sources of literature still influence our speech today. Never too serious or pedantic our discussions usually turn out to involve a lot of laughter.

Our English group is full at present

FRENCH ENCORE Jan Pacey

We are a small friendly, informal group and we read articles and aim to discuss some of the points raised. We work at an intermediate level and are not qualified to assist complete beginners. We have recently started *Enjoy French - part of the Teach Yourself series* and having just completed another book we're exploring our next book, which may be the dual language Lingo Mastery Conversational French Dialogues.

FRENCH REVIVERS -Roger Davies

We usually begin our meetings with 30 to 40 minutes of spoken French. It could be one person telling us about a holiday they have just been on or a special occasion in their life or to explain how they came to have an arm in plaster. Your Leader shows no mercy, so members usually know to come to meetings armed to the teeth with ready-prepared spiel about where they've been, what they've seen or done and so on and so forth. Do not imagine that the members do not lapse into English! Too much French can cause brain-ache.

This is followed by le pause-café and then we study passages from our current book. At the moment, we are using *Conversational French Passages*. In its pages, some texts are rather challenging while others are easier and more enjoyable; and members have two whole weeks to study the texts. Le Professeur Google and your petit dico (dictionnaire) can be your best friends!



Back to the Future.

On the 31st May 2012, the newly established Steering Committee – led by Glyn Hill - met for the first time to begin the process of establishing our u3a here in Thrapston. This pioneering group of volunteers worked tirelessly to write the Constitution, job descriptions, create a website and all the policies and processes needed to run, finance and administer a new u3a. In addition, they helped set up and get running the initial activity groups, that now number 30+. For the retired population of Thrapston and the surrounding villages, and particularly those living alone or socially isolated, this was a life changing event.

None of those initial volunteers had previously been members of any u3a. Many had never been on a committee of any kind, but they gave their time and applied their skills, knowledge and experience, accumulated over their working lives, to build what we now take for granted, Thrapston & District u3a.

The work of those pioneers has been continued for the last 12 years by a steady stream of new volunteers as committee members have retired and been replaced by new blood, bringing fresh ideas and enthusiasm to keep our u3a evolving and expanding. And of course, it's not just the general committee, but the Group Leaders and the Social Committee members and all the other helpers that make it happen.

If ever there was an example of an organisation run "by the people, for the people" this is it. Sadly, at our next AGM in May, several members of the committee, who have served for many years, will be standing down for a well-earned rest and replacements are required.

Positions coming vacant are Chairman and Groups Coordinator and if someone was willing to take over, the Newsletter Editor. Clearly, our u3a cannot continue without a Chairman and working committee, so it's time to go back to our future and like in 2012, seek new volunteers to take our u3a forward.

Unlike 2012, all our processes and policies are well established and we have seasoned members of the committee who can guide and support new members through the learning process and beyond. We require just 3 or 4 people from our membership of 276 to give a few hours of their time to keep this great organisation going forward.

With 3 months until the AGM, new volunteers can sit in on committee meetings and get up to speed, before taking over their preferred positions in May. No one is thrown in at the deep end and left to sink or swim.

I know many of you will think "I can't do that"; but you can. We all have a lifetime of experience and wisdom, so don't under-estimate yourselves. We are the generation that did and still can.

Worse case, our u3a ceases to exist on 16th May 2025, but I know you will not let that happen. If you are even mildly Interested or just curious, contact one of the following, or any member of the committee:

Chairman: Paul Ollett chairmanthrapstonu3a@gmail.com or 07599 209745

Myself,: Frank Boydell vicechair2thrapstonu3a@gmail.com or 07928 747840



***** Have Your Say *****

Are we doing OK or could we be doing better?

What would you like to see happen with our u3a?

No one has the monopoly of bright ideas so share yours with us and if it starts another ball rolling it must be all to the good.

The monthly Newsletter is an ideal forum in which to air your views and opinions although it is wise not to make personal criticisms, (*we wouldn't publish it anyway*). So *have your say and if nothing else it will get it off your chest.*

Send an email to Tina our Editor editorthrapstonu3a@gmail.com or pass a hand written note to any committee member but addressed to the Newsletter Editor and it will be passed on.

Paul



2025 Membership Renewal

Annual membership for 2025-2026 is due on the 1st February, the cost is £20

Our preferred method of payment is by Bank Transfer, but it can also be made by cheque, payable to Thrapston & District U3A or by cash.

For a bank transfer, please quote your Membership No. and full name as the reference.

Account Name: Thrapston & District U3A A/C No: 73437361 Sort Code: 20 45 77

Membership forms can be downloaded from our website www.thrapstonu3a.co.uk

You can also renew your membership at the Plaza meeting on the 17th January and membership forms will be available and payment taken at the Membership table.



Move & Groove

Please note that due to injury there will be no classes until the beginning of February.

If you need to contact me please phone me on 07931 712056. **Janet**



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

Chair: Paul Ollett	chairmanthrapstonu3a@gmail.com
Vice Chair: Frank Boydell	vicechair2thrapstonu3a@gmail.com
Treasurer: Ann Thorpe	treasurerthrapstonu3a@gmail.com
Secretary: Viv Tunstall	secretarythrapstonu3a@gmail.com
Groups Co-Ordinator: Roger Davies	groupsthrapstonu3a@gmail.com
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Plaza Welcome Manager: Kelly Wickham	plazawelcomethrapstonu3a@gmail.com
New Members Representative: Angela Gyves	repthrapstonu3a@gmail.com

Off Committee Role 2024/2025

Access Advisor: Glyn Hill accesssthrapstonu3a@gmail.com

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.

You can also join us on **Facebook** — **Thrapston and District U3A**

JAN

Thrapston & District U3A is a registered charity number 1179593