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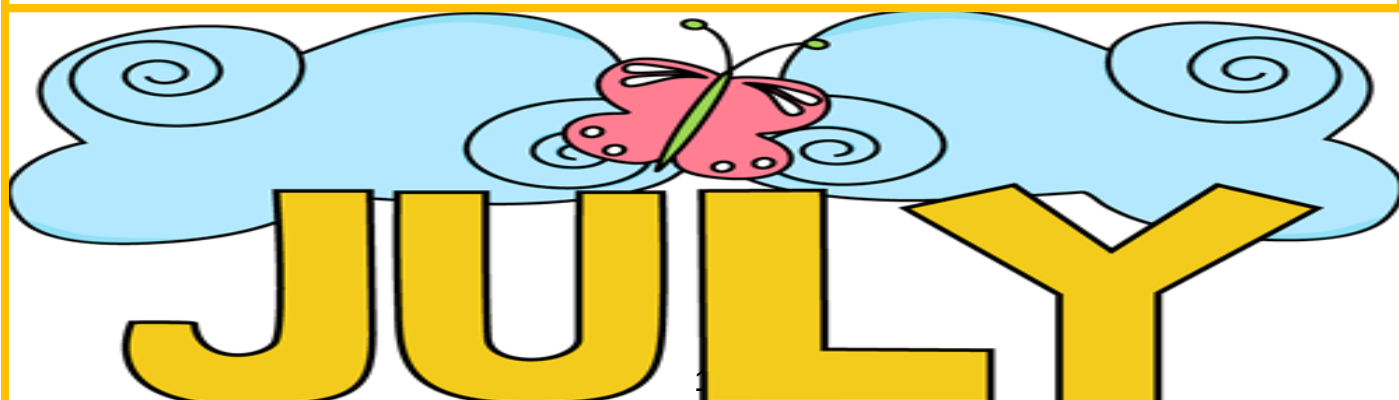
Having our AGM at the end of May, requires a new Chairman to land running – and fast! The first priority is always the formation of the new committee and filling slots that remained vacant after the AGM. So huge thanks to all those willing volunteers who stood again or stepped up at the AGM and a massive welcome to our new IT Operations Manager – Donald Syme and our new Equipment Manager – Tony Lomer-Cross. Thanks also go to all those who work tirelessly in the background keeping our u3a functioning and flourishing: Group Leaders, the Welcome Group and the Social Group. All these are exemplars of the u3a ethos: “by the people, for the people.” Don’t forget to thank them when you see them and maybe ask yourself what you too can do for your u3a.

The next priority was the Sports evening, which you’ll no doubt read more about later in this Newsletter. If ever there was an example to dispel the stereotypical images of the less-young, this was it. We may appear sedate and harmless, but put a few of us in a team and give us a bat and the transformation is startling. There was steely determination, death-before-dishonour competitiveness and a determination to win. Well done everyone who took part; what fun we had.

Now, you might think we had all earned a rest, but no chance. The very next day was the Charter Fair. Blessed by good weather, armed with excellent new leaflets and a willing team, we accosted the good people of Thrapston and enticed them with the delights and opportunities of joining our u3a. It was a long, hot day with many of you taking turns running our stall and the Pot-Luck stand. Thanks to everyone, time will tell how well we did.....Next up: The Summer Social at the Sailing Club, but that’s for another time.

Being the head of this great organisation is hard work, but it’s also a privilege to work with such amazing people.....Enjoy your Newsletter.

Frank



Monthly Meeting

18th July 2025 presentation -Doors open at 10:00 am

15th August 2025 - The Summer Social at the Sailing Club



Magician / Musician – A Funny Turn

18th July: Speaker Dave Moylan

Dave Moylan has been a professional entertainer for much of his long life....As a musician performing all types of music all over the UK, as well as accompanying some of the country's best-known entertainers. Then as a comedy magician, performing at some of the country's most (and least) prestigious venues. Including 25 years as resident magician at Warwick Castle.



Thrapston and District U3A Social Group

The Summer Event at the Sailing Club, August 15th 2025

The buffet lunch at the sailing club, for the Summer event, replaces the meeting at the Plaza on 15th August.

The gates at the Sailing club will open at 11.45 on the day, there will be tea or coffee available and the bar will also be open.

If you require any further information please see me at the July meeting

Polly on behalf of the Social Group
Email: psjohnson2710@gmail.com
Tel: 07867 573219



My story of Spiritual Survival

18th May 2025: Speaker Tracy Bayes

This month's speaker was Tracy Bayes, a psychic, who gave a very thought provoking talk about her colourful life.



Tracy did admit that standing up and talking about her life was out of her comfort zone, but now she has authored her own biography these sorts of talks will become something she needs to get used to!

Tracy began talking about her early life, coming from an eclectic mix of backgrounds, with family heritage in the Jewish and Catholic religions with a dose of gypsy fairground folk thrown in. Her childhood was often spent at the fairground helping set up then testing the rides, or at Southend on Sea playing on the beach. Sounds idyllic.

At this time, she didn't know she was any different to anyone else. She would try to sleep at night but was disturbed by voices, she asked her mum who the man and lady were who talked in her room at night, and her questions were brushed aside. She spoke to her classmates and realised that they didn't hear such things and was ridiculed and so kept things to herself. This couple talked in her room every night until she was 12!

As a teenager she also encountered some unusual happenings, such as seeing her friend's grandmother's face appear before her. Most of her early life though, found her being made fun of if she mentioned these encounters, so chose to keep things to herself and live her life without being part of the spirit world.

She grew up, met and married her now ex-husband and they started a family. Happily pregnant with twins not knowing the heartache to come. Daughter Charlotte was born premature, but baby Georgina died in a very difficult labour. On the day they brought Charlotte home, they had a funeral for Georgina in the morning.

Huge anxiety was a major factor at this time, with fears that something would happen to Charlotte (it didn't she's now in her thirties) and her husband, blaming her for the baby's death became abusive. In 1998 her brother was killed, at the age of 25, in a car accident. Plus, her husband then also tried to strangle her, she reached rock bottom and decided to visit the local spiritualist church.

Her eyes were opened to her new path, she spoke to the lady leading the service, who seemed to know such details about her life, things she couldn't have known – she introduced Tracy to the spirit world and encouraged her to develop her own skills.

People are always looking for evidence, to answer 'is my loved one safe and happy now'? When she tells people about their spirit family, they need the 'golden nugget', the one thing only they know...such as the lady whose song was Paper Roses, or a particular turn of phrase a father used to use.

This year is 14 years after her attempted murder she has a lovely partner, children and grandchildren. She has her own business at The Hideaway offering spiritual readings, reiki and other relaxing treatments. She hosts evenings of mediumship in local halls (hopefully one coming soon to The Plaza!) plus she runs development circles which people can join to develop their own mediumship skills.

She promises to let us know when her biography is out and sign some copies for us.



By Helen Dawson - Vice Chair

Thrapston and District U3A Social Group



Summer Social 15th August 2025

Last chance to buy tickets

There are only a few tickets left for the Summer Social at the Sailing Club.
The last few tickets will be on sale at the July meeting at the Plaza.
If you have requested tickets already please collect them at the July meeting.

Boat trips around the lake may be available again, depending on the weather and the lake condition, the sailing club arranges this for a small donation.

Don't forget to bring your ticket as it will go into the raffle draw.
The cost of the ticket includes the buffet lunch, a raffle and quizzes.

If you have any questions please contact me.

Polly on behalf of the Social Group
psjohnson2710@gmail.com
Tel:07867 573219



This month's story Glyn James

Although most of my career was in IT, I started working life as a schoolteacher. After two years at a not very inspiring comprehensive school, I was looking for a different school or a different career. Instead, I had a sort of late gap year (though I am not sure they had been invented then) in Sweden, teaching English for an organisation called the British Centre. I didn't know a word of Swedish when I went there but that was a qualification because it was an absolute rule that all teaching - even to beginners - was to be in English.

After a month's training and picking up enough Swedish to get by, I was based in Mariestad; a town on the edge of lake Vänern. I taught in school, at evening classes and to morning and afternoon groups who mostly met in each other's houses, rather like u3a, except that they paid the British Centre (mostly) for my services. (I did have the odd private group and private pupil though that was strictly forbidden by the organisation but I was assured that my predecessors had done the same and since my salary was hardly enough to live on I was easily tempted. As a result of that I spent an afternoon in the local prison but only because the governor, a delightful man, became a pupil and then invited me there for a visit.)

Although my teaching schedule was not heavy there was a lot of travelling; on Tuesdays I left my flat at 8.30 am and came home at 11.00 pm having taught classes in two or three different towns.

Unlike the rest of Europe and even the rest of Scandinavia, traffic in Sweden drove on the left. The issue of whether to fall into line with the rest of Europe had been raised year after year for a long time but finally the decision had been made.

On 3 September 1967, shortly after I arrived in Mariestad, Sweden changed over to högertrafik - driving on the right. Well in advance, road signs were changed over but then had temporary signs stuck on top which could be quickly removed when the actual day came. Apart from the maintenance traffic and emergency services all traffic was banned from the roads overnight for a few hours but on the day itself, a Sunday, everyone was encouraged to go out for a short drive.

People drove round the middle of the town at a snail's pace, stopping at the pedestrian crossings which were all manned by volunteers. For months afterwards there were big H signs everywhere to act as a reminder. (For some reason they looked to me rather like coffins.) It was easy for me to adjust;

I was in a foreign country and had driven there through Europe but Swedish people were faced with driving on the other side of roads they had been using all their lives. There were stringent speed limits for many months and there were remarkably few accidents.

Winter was cold; down to minus 15 degrees for long periods. Most people carried a tow rope in their cars and if the car couldn't start (as mine didn't more than once) someone would always offer to tow you to get it started. One person in one of my afternoon groups lived on the nearby island of Torso which meant going on the ferry until winter set in, the lake froze and the ferry could no longer operate.

Glyn James Contd

At that point the authorities would test the depth of the ice and then put up road signs after which traffic simply drove across. I had no mishaps on that ice, but unaware that the roads were already icy in November, I skidded on a corner on my way to an evening class and the car spun round and dived backwards into a ditch

While I was surveying the damage and wondering what to do next, a platoon of Swedish soldiers appeared from nowhere and heaved the car out. I don't know where they came from and their officer waved me off, not wanting me to linger on a dangerous bend. Two or three months later when I was driving home in thick snow I realised too late that deep tracks in the snow were taking the car into a ditch. Once more I was stuck but, incredible to relate, while I was wondering what to do next, a platoon of soldiers.....It really happened.

Social life was not quite like England. There were no pubs and alcohol was not readily available; you could have wine or beer in a hotel but only with a meal. No alcohol was sold in supermarkets; the only place you could buy it was the state shop, Systembolaget, where the assistants looked at you with disapproval. But I met some wonderful Swedish people and went back to visit many times; my good friends lent Tricia and me their cabin by the lake for our honeymoon and we went back to Sweden a year or two later and then to celebrate 25 years of marriage. I didn't go back to teaching though.

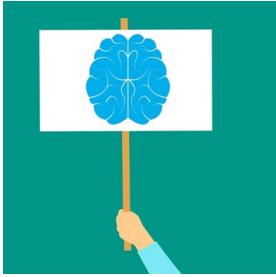


*******Change to the monthly Plaza Meeting charge*******

It was agreed that the members' entry to the Plaza monthly meetings is reduced from £2 to £1.

The visitors' entry of £3 stays the same.

This starts from the July meeting.



Keeping your Brain Happy and Healthy - Part 1

By Helen Dawson

Do you know about Blue Zones?

Blue Zones are specific geographic areas where populations experience exceptionally long and healthy lives, often reaching the age of 100 or older with lower rates of chronic diseases and very little cognitive decline. These regions have been identified through research focused on understanding the factors contributing to longevity and well-being.

Key Characteristics of Blue Zones:

Exceptional Longevity:

People in Blue Zones tend to live significantly longer than average, with a higher proportion reaching the age of 100.

Lower Disease Rates:

Blue Zone populations exhibit much lower rates of common age-related diseases like heart disease, cancer, and dementia.

So, if we are worried about dementia or any other age-related illness what can we learn from those people that live in the Blue Zones?

People in Blue Zones have Distinct Lifestyle Factors

These regions share common lifestyle characteristics that contribute to their remarkable longevity, including:

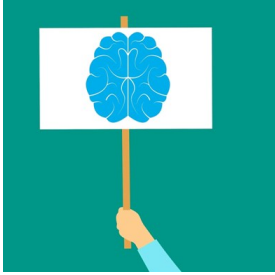
Diet: People in Blue Zones eat a plant-rich diet, often with limited meat consumption and a focus on locally sourced foods. They enjoy a mainly Mediterranean diet.

Physical Activity: Regular, natural movement integrated into daily life through activities like gardening, walking, and daily tasks. Not blasting out an hour a week at the gym but adding more movement naturally to your day.

Social Connections: Strong family and community ties, with a sense of belonging and social support. Having friends, belonging to clubs (such Tennis, Bridge, U3A etc). Volunteering is great for belonging and connecting.

Purpose and Meaning: A strong sense of purpose in life, often tied to religious or spiritual beliefs or community involvement. Once we retire our purpose often disappears for a while whilst we adjust to not having to get up every day for work, we need to actively decide what our new purpose is! As humans we need this motivation.

Stress Reduction: Practices like meditation, spending time in nature, and prioritizing relaxation contribute to stress management.



Keeping your Brain Happy and Healthy - Part 1 Contd

Significance:

The study of Blue Zones provides valuable insights into how lifestyle choices can impact health and longevity. Researchers aim to translate these findings into actionable strategies that can be adopted by individuals and communities worldwide to promote healthier and longer lives

You can read more about Blue Zones here <https://www.bluezones.com/about/history/>

Blue Zones are still under investigation to ensure the correlations made are not being mis-read and interpreted as causation.

Following on from the May event and our obviously Improving success rate you are invited to join us to participate again on a fun evening whatever the result....Paul



THRAPSTON'S MAYOR'S QUIZ NIGHT

THE PLAZA - 30th August 2025

Saturday evening 7.00 for 7.30

Teams of 4-6

*Our U3A has reserved 12 places
(some of which 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: PAULOLLETT@BTINTERNET.COM



u3a Sport Evening for Softies – 27th June 2025

It was a few months back at our coffee morning in Islip Sports Pavillion when I sat in with one of the tables to join the conversation and I heard a chance remark from a lady member named Val. She was talking with others and mentioned that she was a Rounders player.

With the sun streaming across the sports field and in through the pavilion windows my mind set to thinking well why couldn't our u3a have a sport evening? I made a few enquiries and found that there is a thriving and very competitive local Rounders scene already in existence with several villages in the area putting out teams in hard fought matches at various locations.

From what I had gleaned it seemed that these matches could be very aggressive and I had visions of participants carrying bladed weapons in their teeth as they battled their way to victory. I am sure my initial perception was totally wrong but I didn't want to embark on something that was going to be above our abilities. What I was planning was definitely for 'softies'.

Moving on a few weeks we were at Hermitage House, retirement home promoting u3a in Thrapston and the many benefits of joining us when completely by chance I got into conversation with Jackie Ackroyd. Jackie works for an organisation dealing with activities for over 50's and is based at The Pemberton Centre in Rushden.

I outlined the intentions for a Sports Evening at Islip and Jackie was immediately very enthusiastic offering her services and equipment to us completely free of charge. Well, I confess that I am not a maiden but if I was this would indeed be the answer to my prayers.

In quick time a reservation was made to use the facilities at Islip Sports field for the event, choosing a date as close to the longest day of the year as possible and a meeting took place at the Pavillion with Jackie, Frank and me to thrash out a few details.

I soon found out our u3a members are divided into two categories "viewers" and "doers". However, there was a great deal of enthusiasm mounting and it was decided to limit the number we could cater for to 50 in total and it seemed that we had a more or less even split of players and watchers.

The weather Gods were being kind to us on the day and it was fine and warm with a breeze to take the heat of the day away as we formed two teams for the walking Rounders. Jackie had briefed us on the rules with the most important one being that we must not run. Those with a keen eye (or who had perhaps played before)? were mixed in with the rest of us who hadn't got a clue and the match was concluded after 60 balls had been played with a narrow margin separating the two. All with lots of laughs and the spirit of good fun.

After the first game of 'walking Rounders' it was time to take on board some fuel. The Social Group did us proud with burgers in a brioche bun and salad as smoke spiraled gently upwards from the BBQs. Tea & Coffee was available but for any drinks of a more robust nature the participants needed to cater for themselves.

Fortified with our food it was time to take to the field again this time for a complicated game called 'Chuck Ball' and again we were divided into two teams trying to score as many goals as possible by throwing a ball about half the size of a regular football at sprung goals with most of the actions in the game limited to three movements. Under Jackie's guidance ably assisted by her umpire and scorer Emma (from the cake shop) the match proceeded to conclude with a close finish.

The evening slipped away with a lovely ambience and no injuries although just perhaps there may have been a little stiffness from unused muscles the following day. I really could not say.

So, an evening out in Islip for a fiver, where other than Thrapston & District Group u3a would you find that? To my mind it was a bargain in anyone's book. Many thanks to everyone that contributed to the evening in anyway and will we do it again? I hope we can.

Paul Ollett

Sports Evening Photos by Bob Simpson

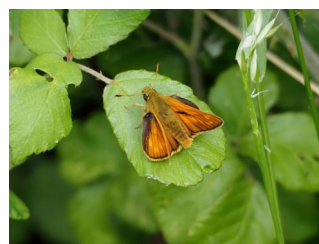


Bobs Butterfly & Birdwatching Outing 4 June 2025

A walk around Thrapston sailing club lake was the venue for our monthly outing. It was glorious June morning and summer had arrived, the sun was shining and a light breeze ruffled the lake. Our group of Paul, Christine, Jim, Pauline, Clare and her dog Harry, and myself set off along the Town Walk adjacent to the lake amongst the dappled shade under the tall trees which lines the path.

You could hear birds singing amongst the trees but the foliage was too dense to see them, we managed to identify a Wren, Blue Tit and Blackcap from the birdsong but there were other birds we couldn't identify.

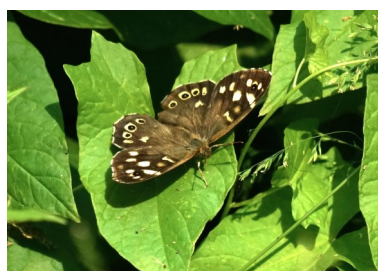
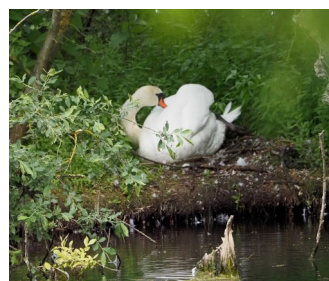
We diverted off the path to the wildflower meadow on the right which is a good place to see butterflies but due to the recent lack of rain there were hardly any Ox-eye daisies or other flowering plants to be seen, however we did spot a couple of Small and Large Skipper's and a few Large White butterflies. The meadow has a large colony of Marbled White butterflies which appear towards the end of June and are around for about three weeks.



We carried on back to the path and here the trees began to thin out and with sun shining a Small Tortoiseshell butterfly was spotted on the brambles along with many Honey and Bumblebees, there was also turquoise Damselflies hovering on the path side vegetation, and Paul saw and photographed a lovely Sedge Warbler



The path turned left and round this end of the lake there are sheltered areas ideal for wildlife with islands and narrow spits of land going out into the water, a Swan was sitting on it's nest preening itself, a Moorhen was fussing around the lily-pads and a Cuckoo was calling from the woods across the river, at the end of July the Cuckoo's will be gone, migrating back to sub tropical Africa for the winter.



There were Foxgloves in the shade along the path and a Speckled Wood Butterfly was perched amongst the vegetation on the lookout for a female. As we carried along the path the river came into view on the right hand side and Dragonflies and damselflies were skimming across the sunlit water, there were clumps of thistles lining the bank and a Small Toiseshell Butterfly busily sipping nectar from It's purple flowers.



As we approached the gate leading on to the gravel road a Cormorant was diving for fish close to bank and then we startled a Heron which took flight across the lake. We reached the road and it was time to head back to the car park, It was a lovely walk around the lake with good company. Many thanks to everyone who came and also to Paul for the photos



If anyone would like to join us on one of our walks please mail me at simpson.robert@sky.com



Radio Pantomime 2025

Exciting News - 2025 will include Christmas

And what does U3A Christmas mean?

Another live Radio Pantomime.

This year we will be performing Snow White and the 7 Ukulele Playing Dwarves



Cast members sought

No previous acting experience required

No need to learn lines - it's a radio Pantomime after all

Lots of silliness

Last year's production of a Christmas Carol was an overwhelming triumph
(well it went down OK).

Let's make Snow White a show to remember.

Please contact Alastair Henderson-Begg (alastairhbegg@gmail.com) to sign up.



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

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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.

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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**



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