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### Welcome from the Chairman

Hello everyone and welcome to this month's Newsletter; my first as your newly elected Chairman. Having missed the AGM due to a previously arranged holiday, it's straight back to business and a very busy period getting the new committee up to speed, whilst preparing for the Sports Evening and – the very next day – the Charter Fair. I hope many of you will enjoy the gentle sports event and BBQ on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June, and visit – or help us run - our stand at the Charter Fair. Do come along and say hello.

Thanks to all those who volunteered to join the committee and keep this great u3a of ours functioning and growing. The names and contact details of all the committee are at the end of this newsletter. Feel free to contact them at any time with your constructive ideas and suggestions.

There are still places on the committee which require filling and you will find further details in this Newsletter. Having built extensive knowledge, skills and experience during your working life, I hope some of you will agree to apply them to the furtherment of our u3a and your community.

Enjoy your Newsletter and I personally look forward to meeting as many of you as possible over the coming year.

Frank Boydell  
Chairman



## Monthly Meetings

20th June & 18th July 2025 Presentations

Doors open at 10:00 am



### *My story of Spiritual Survival*

*20th June: Speaker Tracy Bayes*

My life is my work. My work being a spiritual counsellor sharing the gifts bestowed on me by spirit, to heal and comfort people after trauma and loss. I would like to share my story of the journey to where I am now - about to publish my life story!

It's a story of growth and perseverance but most of all belief and trust in a higher power.



### *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.





## *The History & Mystery of the Victorian Punch & Judy Show*

*16th May 2025: Speaker Mel Harvey*



Brought to us by Mel Harvey, with his brand of irreverent humour! Mel is a Punch and Judy Professor, a title earned by mastering the craft and being accredited by the Punch & Judy Fellowship.

His talk began by telling us how Punch and Judy first appeared. The character Punch is derived from an Italian character called Pulcinella of the commedia dell'arte. Punch and Judy became very popular in England and other parts of the world and still is to this day.



Punch and Judy shows are typically performed in a small booth or stage, and the characters are operated by a puppeteer. The art form became popular due to the fact it could be one person setting up and performing the theatre and so it was a relatively cheap form of art. The Punch and Judy Show is mentioned in 1662 in the diary of Samuel Pepys, when he saw a show in Covent Garden.

The main characters in the show are Punch, Judy, and other characters, such as the Toby the dog, Pretty Polly and sometimes other figures. The traditional Punch and Judy show includes a story of Punch, a mischievous character, and his antics. Modern shows may include different characters or storylines, particularly pertinent to news stories of the day, the basic Punch and Judy format remains.

Mr Punch still remains the outrageous character, with his wife beating and throwing his baby out of the booth and is still loved by children today, and adults too, as was shown by our audience on Friday! Incidentally his stick used for beating up Judy is known as a 'Slapstick' hence where slapstick comedy originates from.

Mr Punch also adds his name to the saying 'as pleased as punch' due to his gleeful satisfaction with how life turns out. Punch and Judy have had opera written about them, this was in 1968 and apparently it was so controversial, and violent Benjamin Britain left the auditorium halfway through.

The second half of our morning was a Punch and Judy Show. Mel had already constructed his booth and was ready to begin. He really proved he had earned his professorship as he calmly dealt with things going wrong behind the scenes.

He soon had U3A members shouting at the puppets, 'Oh no its not!!' was shouted loudly through the Plaza various times. Mel completed his entertainment by calling on two unsuspecting audience members to play catch the sausage!

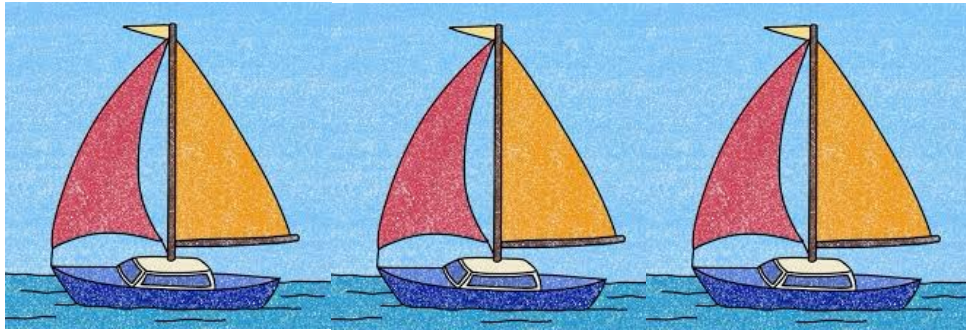


He took questions at the end and a number of people, me included, asked just how he transitioned from voice to voice very quickly, without swallowing the Swazzle (Mr Punch's voice maker) this apparently is a closely guarded trade secret!



As the meeting came to a close, we all left with cheeks hurting from laughing, and generally acting like big kids - all in all it was an excellent morning's entertainment!





## *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.

Tickets will be on sale at the June meeting, the cost is £10.00 and includes the raffle this year. Please let me know when purchasing your ticket if you have a special dietary requirement.

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 June or July meeting at the Plaza.*

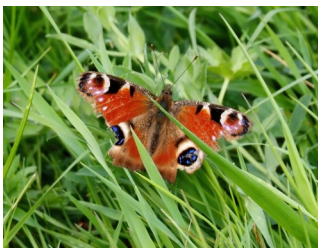
Polly on behalf of the Social Group  
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## *Butterfly & Birdwatching Group Barnwell Country Park 7<sup>th</sup> May 2025*

The weather forecast for Wednesday morning was cloudy and cold but on arrival at Barnwell we were pleasantly surprised as the sun was shining and although there was a chill breeze it was quite warm.

We headed off around Mill lake but apart from a Swan and a couple of Mallard ducks the lake was quiet, there was plenty of birdsong in the surrounding trees but we were unable to see them through the thick foliage. A large White butterfly was fluttering around looking for nectar, and as we made our way to the bird hide an Orange Tip butterfly made a brief appearance before disappearing into the trees.



We sat in the bird hide for a while but with nothing happening we carried on along the path and spotted a Treecreeper busy climbing up a tree trunk looking for insects, quite a rare bird around here and great to see. Further along there was a Peacock butterfly warming up on the grass which had recently woken from hibernation, it was a bit ragged but good to see it had survived the winter to carry on the next generation.

We moved on towards the bridge over the North lake and we were greeted by hungry Mandarin Mallard ducks, Canadian and Greylag geese waiting to be fed and we duly obliged.

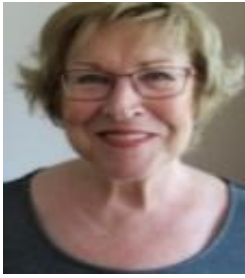


It was then on to the Kingfisher bird hide which overlooks the lake, and as we entered were greeted with a wonderful sight, in front of the hide a pair of Canadian geese were nesting with three eggs in the nest and two very recently hatched goslings, the parents were quick to chase off any birds that got too close.



By now it was getting on for midday and time to go home, we had a very enjoyable stroll around the park and it is thanks to the park rangers and volunteers for all their hard work in keeping it such a great place to visit. Also many thanks to everyone who attended and to our guest Clare and her lovely dog Harry.

Bob Simpson



## *This month's story* *Viv Tunstall*



My childhood story begins in Sunderland where my Dad worked as a Wagonway Man down the pit with my mother a housewife at home like most working families. I was the second of four children all born 7 years apart. Mum always called it the '7 year itch'. What a wonderful childhood I had with the best parents anyone could ever wish for and living just ½ mile from Hendon Beach. Must admit not the prettiest beach in Sunderland but the sand was sprinkled with lots of beautiful glass stones which we used to collect and bring home. I found out recently these were from many years ago when a Glass Factory up the coast in Seaham used to throw all their broken glass over the cliffs into the sea. Now of course they sell the stones for pebble pictures which we see in the shops.

School holidays were the best and on sunny days Mum would send me up our street of terraced cottages to a few of her friends to ask if they fancied a day at the beach. As I recall they always said yes and off we would all go with a picnic. Always tomato and egg sandwiches made with thin sliced bread. By the time we opened them wrapped in greaseproof paper they were so soggy and filled with sand from our hands but to me they were perfect. The only downside I remember was having to walk past the piggeries and one of the mums shouting "Everyone hold your nose" It didn't really work though and I can still remember the smell to this day.

Every Sunday in the summer, as long as it wasn't raining, aunts, uncles and cousins all met at Seaburn Beach where they would share the hire of a tent with deckchairs for the adults. The beaches would be full of families with the men wearing suits. I have a photograph taken by the Sunderland Echo with me aged six sitting in shorts and a top on a very crowded beach. The Toffee Apple, Candy Floss and Chip stalls were just behind where we used to be on the beach. Around the age of 15 Saturdays in the summer was spent at the Cat and Dog Steps, Roker Beach (without parents) to get the best tan we could before heading back there in the evening to gaze at the young guys on the Waltzer. Sunscreen in those days was a mixture of olive oil and vinegar.

At the age of eleven I was the only one of my friends who passed the first part of the 11 plus which was a really difficult time as I was quite shy in those days (where has that girl gone) and the thought of not being with my friends was frightening. I remember looking at that second exam paper and just hurrying through it without thinking. Fortunately for me I failed and off I went with my friends to the local secondary modern. I can still picture my schoolteacher Mr Griggs in our lounge speaking to Mum and Dad so concerned as to how I could have failed. At 13 I was asked to take the exam to transfer to the grammar school which my parents would have loved me to do but I pleaded to stay at the school I loved and my parents agreed but it did leave me with no qualifications because .... we didn't sit any. I loved my parents for not forcing me to change schools.

Sport was very important to me and I was on the Netball, Hockey, and Swimming Team. I trained five days a week at the local pool and ended up swimming for my school, town and county. I gave up swimming when I left school but went on to teach 5/6 year olds on a voluntary basis for my old coach.



My parents paid for me to take private lessons in shorthand typing and at the age of 15 I started dating Bryan and got a job as a junior at an Insurance Brokers where I became head of the General Office and Secretary to the Branch Manager before I left at the age of 20. I moved to James A Jobling (Pyrex Glass) for twice the salary and was secretary to the Home and Exports Sales Manager before getting married to Bryan at the age of 23 and moving down to Coventry where he had a job lecturing home and abroad for Rover Triumph



## Motor Cycle Group—Silver Wheels Rideout



Dave and myself ventured into Wales recently, South Wales to be precise and took time to ride around the Brecon Beacons and the Black Mountains followed by a ride along the Golden Valley: if you haven't yet visited this part of the world you are missing out! The scenery is truly fantastic, best described as travelling through a 'living painting'.



Dave and I concentrated on the aesthetics whilst our wives converted our pensions into shiny metals and brightly coloured fabrics. (We had 'show and tell' when they returned; they showed us their purchase and then declined to 'tell' the cost!) As my wife, Janet said, "that's what you signed up to".

However upon their recommendation we visited a 'heritage site', Tretower Castle at Crickhowell. Built between the 11th and 14th Centuries it consists of a ruined Tower, a Bailey and a very interesting 'Hall' complex. Restoration began in the 1930's and was completed after the Second World War. The wood work is a sight to behold and the rooms are set out as if the building were still in use with the main hall set out for feasting, with an excellent tapestry at one end of the Hall.



For the bikers amongst you Dave and I rode the 'Devil's Staircase', a narrow undulating 3meter wide piece of tarmac through the mountains. (It would have been more enjoyable if we didn't have to concentrate in keeping on track and from falling off the road and down the mountain. BUT we did see in twice because Dave wanted to the reservoir with the largest stone dam in Europe.....It is, what it is said to be, made from ordinary lumps of stone, No masonry and the material sourced from the valley side. (There's a lesson in there somewhere!)

And now for the "nerdy biker" stuff, 600 miles covered in four days. The Triumph recording a very respectable 72mpg and beaten by the Honda which did 75mpg.

The slightly taller frame on the Triumph was little kinder on the knees whilst Dave had to resort to 'en route stretching' when the road allowed. This because Dave's Honda in a 'Street Naked' machine cut back on frills to allow for greater manoeuvrability, quick acceleration and more designed for town riding. My Triumph is described as an 'Adventure Tourer', a little more 'laid back' and possibly more comfortable on long distances. (A comment on 'frills' Dave's Honda comes with all the 'bells and whistles', whilst all those nice things come as 'extras' on a Triumph, and of course at a cost!)

We hope to make a regular contribution to the newsletter, please do come and introduce yourselves, let us know what you find interesting and what 'bores you to tears'.



Tony and Dave

## Numbers and letters Quiz

1	21 on a D	
2	12 M of a J	
3	1 W on a U	
4	650 M of P	
5	8 N in an O	
6	64 S on a C	
7	90 D in a R A	
8	29 D in F in a L Y	
9	168 H in a W	
10	7 C of the R	
11	147 M B at S	
12	7 W of the A W	
13	27 B in the N T	
14	3 M in a B	
15	40 D and N of N'S F	
16	1815 B of W	
17	88 K on a P	
18	1728 C l in a C F	
19	9 L of a C	
20	18 H on a G C	
21	12 S of the Z	
22	13 S on the A F	
23	13 L in a B D	
24	3 B M (S H T R)	
25	9 P in the S S	
26	206 B in the H B	
27	15 M on a D M C	
28	6 P on S T	
29	11 P in a F T	
30	66 B 's in the B	



## Answers to Quiz

1	Spots on a Dice	16	Battle of Waterloo
2	Members of a Jury	17	Keys on a Piano
3	Wheel on a Unicycle	18	Cubic inches in a Cubic Foot
4	Members of Parliament	19	Lives of a Cat
5	Notes in an Octave	20	Holes on a Golf Course
6	Squares on a Chessboard	21	Signs of the Zodiac
7	Degrees in a Right Angle	22	Stripes on the American Flag
8	Days in February in a Leap Year	23	Loaves in a Baker's Dozen
9	168 Hours in a Week	24	Blind Mice (See How They Run)
10	Colours of the Rainbow	25	Planets in the Solar System
11	Maximum Break at Snooker	26	Bones in the Human Body
12	Wonders of the Ancient World	27	Men on a Dead Mans Chest
13	Books in the New Testament	28	Pockets on a Snooker Table
14	Men in a Boat	29	Players in a Football Team
15	Days and Nights of Noah's Flood	30	Books in the Bible

**\*\*\*\*\* NEW GROUP \*\*\*\*\***

### YOGA



Grab your mats and join us at our **NEW** yoga group !

Every Thursday 1-2pm at the Atlas Martial Arts Academy in Islip.

Starts Thursday 19th June

£5 per session, lead by a professional yoga instructor.

All abilities catered for, no experience necessary.

(Mats available if you don't have one)

For further information or to book onto the session please email [vicechair2thrapstonu3a@gmail.com](mailto:vicechair2thrapstonu3a@gmail.com)



## IT Operations Manager

A vacancy exists on the u3a committee for an IT Operations Manager. The primary role is looking after our u3a email accounts. Specifically:

- Installing emails onto committee members' devices - Windows and Apple devices generally – as committee members change
- Holding the recovery email and telephone number, to recover accounts that get Locked out.
- Provide general advice and guidance on IT issues to the committee.
- Providing IT assistance to committee members.

Maintenance of our website is sub-contracted out, so would not constitute part of your responsibilities.

If you feel you have the skills to take on this important role and want to discuss it in more detail before deciding, please contact myself. Full assistance and support will be provided to get you started.

Frank Boydell

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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](http://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**



*Thrapston & District U3A is a registered charity number 1179593*