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Musing from the Chairman



Wow, where did the last year go? Once again, it's May and our Annual General Meeting. Hopefully we have all our ducks in a row and it should only take 15-20 minutes tops. Then we can get on to our excellent entertainer, Andy Smith. I think this is Andy's 5th or 6th visit and he never fails to entertain and get us singing along.

I'll be reading out my Chairman's End of Year Report at the AGM, but it's worth repeating that our wonderful u3a is run by around 50 volunteers who do everything from making tea, to producing this Newsletter. Please remember to say thanks and to offer a little of your time when we need some help.

I confess I'm very excited by the upcoming Sport Evening at Islip Pavillion on June 12th. We'll have Walking Rounders and Walking Hockey all organised and run by Jackie Ackroyd of Freedom Leisure. There's also a BBQ to keep your energy levels up. Last year's event was so much fun and *very competitive. Some people had to be reminded running was not allowed and threatened with disqualification! I'll be a good boy this year (some chance). Get your tickets at the monthly meeting.*

Also in June is the Thrapston Charter Fair. We always have a stall and attract several new members every year. It's a long day, but we look forward to meeting many of you. Do drop in and say hello and maybe help out while some of us grab a bite and a drink. Negotiations for good weather are ongoing, but I remain optimistic about topping up the tan.

Lastly, I've been contacted by Charlotte from Schoolreaders. This is a charity that trains and places volunteers (usually older people) into primary schools to listen to children read and help improve their literacy. They have worked with other u3as previously and wondered if any of our members would like to get involved. There's a leaflet in this Newsletter with further information and contact details and there will be more leaflets and bookmarks at the AGM to take home. I know many people find working with young people very rewarding.

Enjoy the rest of the newsletter and I'll hopefully see you at the monthly meeting in the Plaza.

Frank



Monthly Meetings

AGM 15th May followed by Presentation:

Doors open at 9:45 am

19th June Presentation -

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



A Musical Morning

15th May - Speaker Andy Smith

We last saw Andy in 2024, and he promises to entertain us with another fabulous musical morning.

Andy has given his 'music talks' to lots of U3A's, Rotary Clubs WI's, Lodges and sundry events and likes to think that he offers something a little bit different. He is a song-writing multi instrumentalist (guitar, mandolin, ukulele, banjo, tenor guitar, sitar, piano) and singer.



The River Trent—– England's Heart

19th June - Speaker Micheal Burton

England's prosperity was built along the waterway which, since ancient times, has been a great border, the country's north-south dividing line. Great men, great queens, and great innovation mark the Trent's history. Yet it is, for all that, a mysterious river; silently and secretly doing its own thing and not fully known or understood.





Thrapston & District U3A Annual General Meeting

May 15th 2026

The Plaza, Thrapston

To commence at 10.15. Doors will open at 9.45.

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Minutes of the 2025 AGM**
- 3. Chairman's Report**
- 4. Group Co-ordinator's Report**
- 5. Treasurer's Report**
- 6. Approval of the examined accounts**
- 7. Approve appointment of the Examiner of Accounts**
- 8. Election of the Committee for 2026/27 - Chairman,
Vice Chairman, Treasurer and Business Secretary,
(the Executive Members), and a committee of 8 other members**

Vivien Tunstall

Business Secretary

2nd April, 2026



What did the Romans do for us 17th April – Speaker Chris Carr

Review by Dave Tolmie



In *What the Romans Did for Our Kitchen*, Chris Carr explains how many everyday features of modern kitchens and food culture can be traced back to the Romans. His main argument is that although technology has advanced, the basic ideas behind how we cook and what we eat were heavily influenced by Roman innovation.

One key point is that the Romans introduced new **ingredients** to Britain. Foods such as olives, olive oil, garlic, onions, cabbage and asparagus were brought over from across the Roman Empire. These ingredients are still common in kitchens today, showing how Roman tastes shaped British diets. They also used imported foods like dates and almonds, proving that they had a wide trading network and enjoyed experimenting with flavours.

Carr also highlights Roman **cooking methods**. Techniques such as baking, roasting, boiling and frying were widely used in Roman times and are still the foundation of cooking today. Even though we now use modern appliances like ovens and hobs, the basic processes remain very similar to those used 2,000 years ago.

Another important contribution was **kitchen equipment**. The Romans used tools like the *mortaria* (a type of mortar for grinding ingredients) and simple ovens such as the *testun*. These early tools are similar to modern kitchen equipment like pestles and ovens, showing how Roman design influenced later developments.

Finally, Carr suggests that the Romans changed people's attitudes to food. They valued flavour, used herbs and spices, and enjoyed social dining. Food became more than just survival—it was something to be enjoyed and shared.

Overall, the Romans played a major role in shaping our kitchens. From ingredients and tools to cooking methods and food culture, many aspects of modern life can be linked directly back to Roman influence.





Islip Sports Pavillion

5:30 – 8:00 pm

Tickets: £6.00

Featuring Walking Rounders & Hockey

Refreshments Included:

Burgers – Salad – Tea – Coffee

Bring your own drinks and glasses

Come Along and Give It a Try

**Enjoy an evening of fun, friendly competition
and good company**

**Tickets will be available at Plaza Meeting on 15th May
and to be paid for on the day.**

The Third Age Trust

To find out about more about the Third Age Trust click on the following links

You will find a wealth of information such as online learning opportunities, online interest groups, events and online workshops and so much more,.

[u3a - Welcome to u3a](#)

Click on the link below to read the highlights of the Spring issue of the u3a matters magazine.

[u3a - u3a matters](#)

The u3a Friends newsletter shares news, learning opportunities and member stories from across the u3a movement

[Your u3a Friends Bitesize Newsletter April 2026](#)



Free Mature Drivers Event 18 May 2026 - Oundle



Are you a mature driver (aged 60+)? Live in Northamptonshire? Rely on being able to drive? This FREE event is for you!

Driving is an important part of our everyday life and we (Northamptonshire Safer Roads Alliance (NSRA)) are keen to help to keep mature drivers driving safer for longer.

Our driving ability to drive changes over time for different reasons, especially as we get older. It's important that we recognise whether and how our driving is changing so we can stay safe and protect both ourselves and those around us.

This Mature Drivers event is aimed at drivers 60+, and will cover all different aspects of driving.

There will be FREE hints and tips drives available to book, delivered Northampton Advanced Motorists.

Our aim is to keep mature drivers driving safer, for longer.

Book your Free tickets via

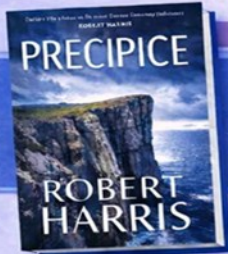
Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/northants-mature-driver-roadshows-4099083>

The event is being held at Fletton House, Fletton Way, Glaphorn Road, OUNDLE PE8 4JA (what3words.com///self.cloak.tonal) with two sessions, 10 am and 12.30 pm.

THRAPSTON U3A BOOK CLUB

Stories That Spark Curiosity and Conversation

Lively • Engaging • Thought-Provoking • Welcoming



Our Next Book:

PRECIPICE

by Robert Harris

A Gripping Political Thriller!



Next Meeting:

Friday 22nd May
10.30am

Thrapston Library



Contact:

Theresa Wood

✉ theresawood634@gmail.com

☎ 07976 969539



Volunteers Needed!

Did you know one in four children leave primary school unable to read to the expected standard?

This will have a negative impact on their secondary education and future life-chances.

Schoolreaders is working to change this.



A Community Champion in your local area is working with Schoolreaders to improve children's Literacy.

Schoolreaders recruits, trains and places volunteers into local primary schools to listen to children read. No experience is required. All you need is an hour a week, a love of reading and a little patience, and you can help to change a child's life story.



Still want to help but don't have time to volunteer? There are plenty of other ways to get involved! Why not help us to fundraise or spread the word?

**Find out more at
Schoolreaders.org**

Tel: 01234 924111

E: admin@schoolreaders.org

Schoolreaders CIO

Registered in England and Wales, Charity number: 1159157

Art Group

My name is Annie and I am group leader for the art group which I hasten to add is currently full to bursting. I cannot believe that we have been running for around two and a half years, my how time has flown. In those early days the majority of my members had not picked up a paintbrush since school days and many didn't even have their own equipment, so it was back to basics, colour mixing, flat washes, graduated washes, spattering, we even used cold coffee as a medium in place of paint. We have certainly moved on since those early days and now the members choose their own topics and their creativity and ability has taken flight.

I asked them all what they did with their creations. Some have their work framed and on display at home, others simply place everything in plastic sleeves which ends up hidden in a draw somewhere. I for one think that is very sad, I believe their commitment and new found skills should be acknowledged so I came up with the idea of asking the editor if she would agree to featuring one or two paintings each month when space allows. This then is our first foray at exhibiting some work, kindly provided this time by Pauline, my second in command and Cherry who has been with us from the beginning.

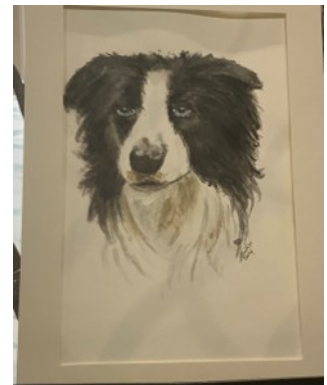
Pauline Wright



Amber Fox after AI generated art work



Street Scene in Pen & Wash



Border Collie in Watercolour

Cherry French



Cottage in Watercolour after Harriet De Winston



Yellow Roses after Wendy Tait

GROUP INFORMATION

BOWLING

It's been suggested that we could have an outdoor bowling group again.

Thrapston Bowling Club may be able to host us. It would be on a weekday morning monthly for four or five months (May or June until September). We'd expect the cost to be £5 each meet, so £20 or £25. We would need a least ten players and so we'll have a sign-up sheet available at the May monthly meeting or you could email groupsthrapstonu3a@gmail.com to express your interest. If we get enough signings, we'll organise a short meeting to decide one or two mornings and hopefully ask someone to step in as group leader.



HISTORY WALKS

Last week we had a really interesting walk around Islip led by Eric Franklin when we learned about all sorts including the Washington family, sun dials, Canadian wall construction and horse harnesses made from rushes - fascinating.

Our next walk is in Titchmarsh led by Ian Curtis the village historian on Thursday 28 May at 2 at the Village shop or at 1.40 at the coop car park in Thrapston for shared cars. The walk will be followed by a cream tea at the clubhouse - cost to be advised soon. Please sign up at the meeting or email glynishill06@gmail.com





This months "Story" Gordon Campbell

After reaching the unlikely age of 75, coupled with the prodding of Tina Jones I am writing a brief autobiography.

Being born in Glasgow I am a true Scot. Between 1952 and 1958 we moved between Glasgow, Inverness and Dalavich in Argyll, but in 1958 we moved to Corby which was the catalyst in my life.

From the local primary school at age 11 I moved to Corby Grammar School. Mr Kempe the headmaster is best known for taking over from Kurt Hahn at Gordonstoun. Colin (Morse) Dexter tried to teach me Latin. High Court Judges, doctors, dentists and a number of teachers number among my contemporaries.

Sport played a big part in my school life, athletics and rugby being my main passion. In the sixth form School rugby on Saturday morning was followed by third team rugby for Stewart's and Lloyd's.

Athletics was my main sport, travelling around the country to various meetings and championships. County at British Timken in Duston, Midlands in Warley and Inter Counties at Crystal Palace. Perhaps the pinnacle was achieved when finishing 4th in the AAA's 440yds indoors at RAF Cosford.

During my Army service with 7 RHA, I saw service in Northern Ireland on more than one occasion. Prior to going to Northern Ireland was the infamous P Company 9 days of hell. Day one your first test was a 10mile march carrying full kit and weapon in under 2 hours. The following Thursday was "stretcher race" and your first experience of the "Fan dance". Milling was a joy. Two of you of similar height and weight were given 16 ounce boxing gloves and for the next 60 seconds you tried to punch the living daylights out of each other. By the end you could hardly pick your hands up to punch. Defence was frowned upon. Aggression was the only requirement.

Parachuting was a necessity. To retain your extra pay 8 jumps a year had to be completed. This led to some funny experiences.. On Salisbury Plain, I got entangled in an electric cattle/sheep fence. Moving was a twitchy business, with an electric shock each time I tried. Freedom came after what seemed like hours.

A more enjoyable experience was in Cyprus. Before being scrapped, parachutes are sent to the RAF at Episkopi. Here they are used for water jumps from a Hercules C130 at 800 feet into the bay. The skill was to release your parachute as your feet touched the water. Judging your height over a flat



calm sea in bright sunshine can be tricky. Holding on to the harness after you had released the buckle is a strength test. If your estimation of the height was out you had a long hang. A few managed the skill, the majority, yours truly included let go too soon and hit the water with great force. A fun experience.

On the completion of my service, I worked in the IT industry for over 30 years. My sporting interest was golf, never the most spectacular player supporting a handicap in the low 20's. However, on a Friday evening I decided to have a few holes after work. Unfortunately, I met the Club Secretary and proceeded to play my best golf ever. The following week my handicap was 12. A level I never reached again,





Day Trips

QUEEN ELIZABETH II - HER LIFE IN STYLE

I have booked tickets for this Exhibition at the Kings Gallery in London for **Tuesday 4th August**.

The cost, including coach & entry to the Exhibition, will be around **£55 to £60** (depending on numbers).

I currently still have some availability but unfortunately will be on holiday at the next monthly meeting.

However, if you are interested, please e-mail me on peterandjeanmole@btinternet.com

I will be collecting payments at the June meeting.

Jean Mole



RIVER BOAT TRIP

I have booked a River Boat trip from Harford Marina, Huntingdon, PE28 2AA to Godmanchester on Friday 14th August.

This is self-drive to the Marina, but I can organise car share if you wish. The cost for the boat trip itself is just £10.

However, for those that wish, I will be ordering Fish & Chips to be delivered to the boat once we get to Godmanchester.

This is an additional cost of £12:50. I currently have just 4 more spaces for this trip.

If you are interested, please e-mail me on peterandjeanmole@btinternet.com

I will be collecting payments at the June meeting.

Jean Mole

OUT TO LUNCH

BACK SOON

LUNCH CLUB

This month we are dining at

The Bell, Little Addington, NN14 4BD on Wednesday 20th May

If you haven't already signed up for this meal, please email me and I will forward you the menu, which is an extremely reasonable £14;25 for 2 courses or £17:55 for 3 course, both amounts including 10% service charge.

Our June Lunch Club will be at

**The Watermill Tea Rooms & Restaurant, Ringstead, NN14 4DU.
Wednesday 17th June**

I will be sending the menu out shortly to those members who are on my Lunch Club list.

Please contact me if you are not on my list but would like me to forward you the menu

Jean Mole

peterandjeanmole@btinternet.com



Welcome to our new members

Mrs. Helen Clarke
Mr. James Rose
Sue Johnson-Hill

Mrs. Pamela Coales
Ms Tina Hardwick
Mrs. Wendy Swainson



U3a Silver Wheelers

With the approach of the second Friday in May it was agreed that a preliminary meeting was needed to discuss upcoming outings, therefore a get together was arranged for Thursday at the Woolpack, Islip to look at the possibilities of a ride to a suitable destination on the following day.

You will readily understand that especially at this time of year motorcycle outings are not rigidly governed by set days and in April and early May as the sun shines the motorcyclists appear, just like the Butterflies although perhaps with just a trifle more noise?

Yes! Sunshine that is the key and recently excursions were made to destinations near and far. In fact, out to Peterborough Volunteer Fire Station and beyond to the very edge of the Cambridgeshire fenlands at Upwood where like minded individuals were to be found, usually cooing over their magnificent machines. Other destinations on offer at around the same time were Launde Abbey in Rutland with its splendid parkland and reasonably priced café.

Closer to home there was a visit to Tansor village hall where there were a gathering of many classic bikes and a sprinkling of more modern machines which after all will be the classic bikes of the future.

The course of motorcycling does not always run smoothly as proved to be the case when riding out to Holly Lodge at Upton for a morning's coffee, bacon roll and a good chat when Rob's Royal Enfield Continental developed a problem with the fuel feed causing him to be drenched in petrol. It was the end of the ride that day for Rob and the bike had to be recovered but I am pleased to report that he soon had the necessary replacement part and is back on the road again.

So back to the plot at The Woolpack then and we decided that our destination for the morning of 8th May would be the Shuttleworth Collection site at Old Warden Airfield in Bedfordshire and its welcoming café. (In the absence of a better idea).

Having knowledge of the rural roads in North Bedfordshire I volunteered to lead the ride setting off from our customary departure point at Thrapston Co-op car park just after 10.00am. Just four riders on this occasion to make the 34 mile journey to our destination, once more blessed with glorious sunshine. We made steady progress with the ride taking a little over an hour to the venue where it was apparent from the array of bikes already there that this is indeed a popular destination for motorcyclists.

Now I would not like anyone to run away with the idea that vegetarian riders are not welcome as part of our 'raison d'être' is the quest for a good bacon roll. These days there is a whole range of good vegetarian alternatives, (or so they tell me). All that is really needed is a motorbike, a full licence and an open mind. If you have these as Del Boy might say "the world is your lobster"! You would be made really welcome.

Paul Ollett



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 2025/2026

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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.

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



Thrapston & District U3A is a registered charity number 1179593