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Your 2025/26 Committee



Musings from the Chair

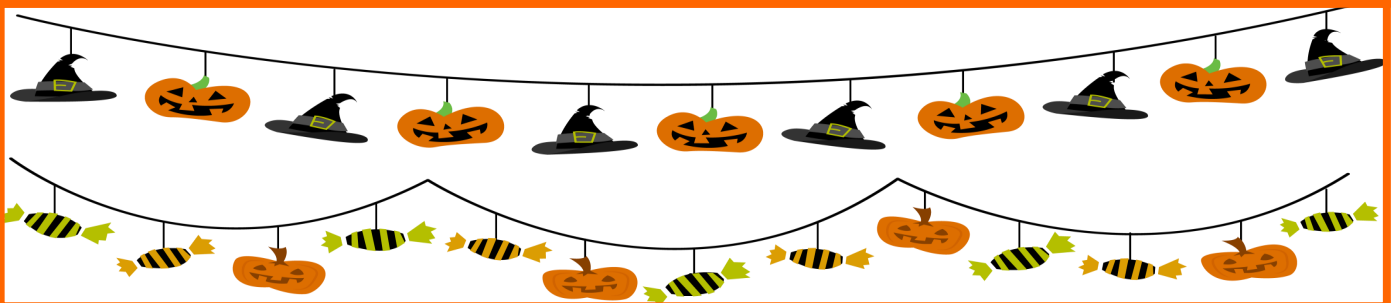
*That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang...*

Sonnet 73 - William Shakespeare.

It seems our last speaker and poet, has influenced me more than I realised, but as we slip from long hot days to misty mornings and the unpicked fruits fall nestling in the grass, we know that autumn has truly arrived. Such a bountiful autumn too. We've been hiding away in the New Forest where sweet chestnuts, conkers and acorns are everywhere this year. As I write, the leaves are blowing from the trees, soaring and twisting before falling and carpeting the ground. I love this time of year; childhood memories of kicking up the leaves, and bonfire night with treacle toffee and pasties and parkin and that unforgettable smell of burned-out fireworks. I hope our great grandchildren will look back with similar memories.

This month we have the musician and entertainer Neville Cooper, who will be introducing us to South American music. This should be both entertaining, fun and educational.

I've been really pleased by the number of new groups in the process of starting up. Yoga began just a couple of weeks ago and is already filling up. Line Dancing starts 1st November and there's ongoing planning for a Book Group, a Choir and possibly, occasional trips. Groups have always been why people join u3a, which is why Group Leaders are our most important and valued members. Of course, if we don't offer what you would like, why not start a new group? Full support is given and a start-up grant of £25 is available for materials. Remember, you don't have to be a subject-matter expert and you don't have to do it all yourself. All members of the group can and should assist. It's not unusual for one member to teach, whilst others look after admin, communication and finance. In addition, there's lots of specialist subject advice and guidance on the Third Age Trust website. Got an idea? Speak to Polly our Groups Coordinator.....Enough from me. See what else is in your newsletter and enjoy,



Monthly Meetings

17th October & 21st November 2025 presentations

Doors open at 10:00 am



Discover South American Music

17th October: Speaker Neville Cooper.

Neville studied at The Welsh College of Music. He has been performing Latin, Jazz and Classical music with a variety of music groups for many years. He is a published composer and has produced a number of CDs. His music has also been performed by leading instrumentalists in England and America.



An Introduction to Acupuncture

21st November: Speaker Spod Dutton

A whistle-stop tour of acupuncture, from its early roots to the latest evidence. Learn how an acupuncture treatment is delivered and what the benefits might be.

From a clinical point of view, Spod specialises in chronic and musculo-skeletal pain and wellbeing problems such as stress and anxiety.

Bert Flitcroft – How to Love Poetry



Our latest speaker was Bert Flitcroft, a charming poet who challenges the idea that poetry can be boring or inaccessible to most people. His personal mission is to make poetry accessible to all in the hope that more people can enjoy the art form.

Bert used to be an English teacher and would get his teenage pupils to write poems, whilst he wrote one on the board, after some time people began to comment just how good they were, and that he should send them to a publisher. He also began to learn as much as he could about poetry, attending courses and going to events. Learning what spoils a poem, how to start, when to end and much more... He won a poetry competition and so decided to compile his first book.

After his first book of poetry was published he began speaking at events and running poetry workshops.

During his talk with us, he read some of his poems, 'Almost' about love, which really made you think, 'Little Ways' about living with your partner, which made us smile and 'Bridges' about wartime and his Uncle Albert, after whom he was named.

After each reading we were given time to contemplate and make comment. He showed us how rhyming wasn't necessary but getting a balanced sound quality was.

He read many more of his poems and having time to digest and think about each one was a peaceful treat in our busy lives. One he didn't read but I have found follows...

Waiting for Anna

This Moses basket fresh by the bed
is waiting,
Like a promise, like a Truth
about to come true.
Not for a casting off among the reeds
but for a coming
home.

To open a door, to enter a room,
is always to begin again.
Already the basket's empty space,
the very air inside it,
is sacred.

There is nothing more to say.
Silence has a voice.
Emptiness is eloquent.



If you've been inspired by Bert Flitcroft, maybe you could write a poem? Think about his wise words and give it a go! You can send your poems to speakersthrapstonu3a@gmail.com and I will collate them and put them on our Facebook page and in the next newsletter. I will pass them to Bert and I am certain he will enjoy reading them!

Access Matters Update

Hello, I'm the Access Advisor for our u3a and it's been a while since I provided information and so I thought I'd provide an updated overview:

PARKING

I know that parking continues to be an issue for all of us and it has been exacerbated by the closure of the Bridge Hotel and the car park. There's still free parking in the Bull Ring and at the Coop in Sackville Street which are both quite a distance and we still have an agreement with Bletsoe that we can use the cattle market car park at the Midland Road end of Market Street during meeting times. There is just one designated parking place for blue badge owners to the right of Plaza entrance and this is on a first come, first parks, basis.

THE PLAZA

Induction loop: The town council have had issues with the loop in the Plaza but I understand that it's now working. If you have a hearing aid, please use the facility by switching by switching to T

Access to the building: There is a 1:20 ramp to the right-hand side of the building with entrance through the fire door by the stage. Please also use this in case of a fire alarm if you have mobility problems.

Seating: At each monthly meeting, there are reserved seats at the front for those members with mobility, hearing and sight problems, please feel free to use these together with anyone accompanying you.

Toilet: The accessible loo is situated in the foyer, it has rails, an accessible basin and limited room for a side transfer from the left.

GROUPS

Access to buildings used by our groups varies; the library meeting room, Islip Village Hall and Castle Court being fairly accessible and the Baptist Church now has a stairlift for first floor activities. Overall, we have a range of local buildings to choose from so if you do find you are unable to join a group because of access, please speak to the Group Leader in the first instance.

If you have any issues with accessing our u3a, either for the monthly or group meetings please let me know and I'll endeavour to help.

Glyn Hill

Accessthrapstonu3a@gmail.com

Tel: 07742969096



JIGSAW SWAP SHOP

NEXT U3A MEETING AT THE PLAZA ON 17TH OCTOBER



NO MONEY NEEDED

JUST BRING YOUR UNWANTED JIGSAWS AND SWAP THEM FOR ONES
YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY DONE.

YOU WON'T GET BORED ON THOSE LONG WINTER NIGHTS AS YOU WILL HAVE
HOURS OF PLEASURE WITH YOUR NEW JIGSAWS

If you are unable to come to the October meeting and would still like a few
jigsaws, then give me a ring and you can either call round to see me or I will
pop round to yours with a selection.

Kelly - 07718386330

Learn to Live Musical

The U3A are working to raise the profile of U3A . Below is short musical
video following a recent study called “Learn to Live” a blueprint for better
health and wellbeing.

https://youtu.be/QkkBF_aP9-s?feature=shared

To open the hyperlink right-click the link and select “Open Hyperlink” from
the short cut menu that will appear,

U3A Cycle & Stride

This adventure started with planning a route we could all complete whilst visiting as many participating churches as possible. The end route was 28 miles and 13 churches.

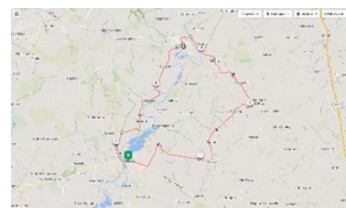
The day began with seven of us leaving Thrapston, heading out towards Titchmarsh. We lost one member of the group around 10 miles due to power failure meaning a call out to the broom wagon.

The stand out church was Hemmington with a congregation of 6. We arrived to a home made spread of freshly baked goodies, friendly faces and local facts and stories.

Pedaling through the beautiful scenic countryside together we visited the churches whilst ticking off the miles. During the later stages one of the team had mechanical issues but was able to continue.

Six of us conquered the adventure and rolled over the finish line. A seamless, well organised event with memorable memories raised valuable funds for our local churches.

Theresa Wood



Plaza Sound System

Those of you who attend our monthly meetings, will have been aware that the sound system at the Plaza has been less than ideal for some time. I've been in discussions with the Town Council about getting it fixed for months. Following September's meeting, I met up with a member of council staff at the Plaza and together, we worked through the system. Amazingly, of the four speakers in the hall, only one was working. With this corrected and the volume of the microphones increased to our requirements, you should all be able to hear our speakers much clearer in future.

Thrapston & District U3A

Christmas Event 2025



19th December at the Plaza

Tickets for the above event will be on sale at the October meeting.

The cost is £10.00 and payment can be made by card or cash.

The cost includes a radio show, a super raffle, a welcome drink, tea or coffee and a light lunch.

Doors open at 10.30 and we will finish about 13.30.



Dress for the event, wear your Christmas jumper and Santa Hat



Polly on behalf of the Social Group

Telephone: 07867 573219

Email: psjohnson2710@gmail.com



Tricia James—A Career in Nursing'

Part 2 - From Staff Nurse French to Dr James

In November 1969, based on my first experience of midwifery at the Red House in Harpenden, I enrolled on a midwifery course at the General Lying-in Hospital in London. The hospital was founded in 1767 and known as the General Lying-in Hospital from 1818 because unlike other London Midwifery units it was not connected to a religious order and accepted both married and unmarried women. After Dr John Lister was appointed as consulting surgeon in March 1879, the Hospital became the first to practise antiseptic midwifery. In the same year the hospital opened a midwifery training school and became the first to take male students. The hospital closed in 1971.

I successfully completed Part 1 of the course but whilst I enjoyed some aspects of midwifery it was not really for me. The pace on the postnatal wards was very slow as Mothers stayed for 10 days after delivery, giving them the opportunity to rest and bond with their babies. In addition, although I had enjoyed most aspects of London life, I found some things difficult such as cycling home round Vauxhall after a late shift - which was always very scary!

In 1970 I started a Staff Nurse post on a neurosurgical ward at the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford which was interesting, but after 6 months I was offered a night sister post covering all areas of the hospital including A&E.

As a night sister I was on a rota for cardiac arrest or fire anywhere in the hospital. The resuscitation team consisting of a night sister, the on-call doctor and the porter with responsibility for the resuscitation trolley were expected to get to the patient as quickly as possible regardless of what they were doing. Our race to the area with the large unwieldy trolley which contained everything that would be needed in the resuscitation process must have looked very strange. Does it still happen?

I also experienced the actions of an arsonist who started many small fires in unmanned areas at night. These, whilst irritating were not dangerous and patient safety was not compromised. There was however one real fire. It was thought to have started in the neurosurgical intensive care above the neurosurgical ward and spread to the neuro-library and laboratory. Staff came from all over the hospital and several like me from our beds in the nurses home. We moved 116 patients in under 10 minutes including many who were bedbound. Beds and patients were deposited in any ward or staffed area. Despite the horror of the fire which was accompanied by loud bangs as chemicals in the lab exploded, no-one was injured and the staff were highly commended by the Fire Service.



After everything had settled down I went round and noted where the patients all were and with the exception of one young lad, they were all safe. I could not find him however, despite an extensive search. He had been admitted some days before with a brain abscess which was found to be inoperable. He was deeply unconscious and the outlook for him was poor. Eventually I was directed to a young man on the gynae ward with an enormous bandage round his head sitting up in bed eating a gigantic breakfast! It was thought that during the move his bed may have been banged and the resulting shake had caused the abscess to burst and relieve the pressure. He went home 2 days later.

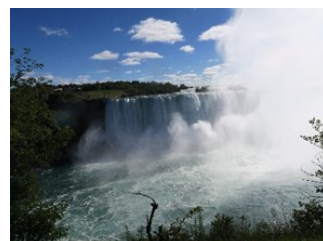


Tricia James—A Career in Nursing' From Staff Nurse French to Dr James Contd

In 1973 I was invited to take part in research related to night duty and sickness rates and as a result won a King's Fund 6-week scholarship to the States. There were three professional groups, nurses, doctors and administrators in the team. Interestingly the nurses were sent a cheque for £50 to buy ourselves suitable clothes for the trip – information that we were told not to share. We arrived in North Carolina at what was 6pm local time but midnight for us. We were invited to a formal dinner to welcome us, followed by a walk (at 4am for us) around the town and the campus, co-incident with a mass 'streak' - a thousand students running through the streets wearing only trainers! A truly surreal experience.

Each professional group was mostly introduced to different aspects of care. For the nurses this included under-staffed and under-provisioned wards for patients whose insurance had run out, a crowded hospital for the indigent poor, staffed only by medical students and next to it a new state of the art hospital with few patients. We were also introduced to technology and ways in which it could assist care, such as electronic care plans. We saw how they could improve the delivery of care but also cause deficiencies as nurses concentrated on the care plans rather than the patient. We were also introduced to robotic trolleys at the hospital, which were very scary as they came along the corridors, turned and went into lifts 'Dalek' fashion!

We spent most of our time in North Carolina and then travelled via New York to Ottawa where we were treated to tea with the Speaker in the House of Commons. Finally we visited Niagara Falls which was largely frozen – a magnificent sight. Overall this was an amazing action-packed experience and I learnt a great deal.



This was the end of my practical nursing career as I moved to nurse education after my marriage to Glyn in 1974. Soon after I undertook a teaching course at Wolverhampton University and not only left my new husband for a year but also took his brand new Triumph Spitfire and left him my ancient battered mini!

I enjoyed teaching and continued to follow a career in education from Clinical Tutor to Principal Lecturer at Northampton University. Co-incidentally I developed an interest in historical research and studied for a PhD. My thesis explored infant and neonatal mortality with a focus on the experience of shoemakers in Rushden at the end of the 19th century. My main source material was the original smallpox vaccination registers providing a wealth of social history not easily found elsewhere but unused previously for research purposes. It was a fascinating topic for study and I was awarded a doctorate in 2006 and retired in 2012 - so ended a long interesting nursing career from Nurse Pat to Doctor James.





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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