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Musings from the Chair

Thank goodness the rain has finally appeared. The garden is sucking it up like blotting paper and green shoots are appearing in the desert that was once a lawn. The fruits on the trees are swelling to full ripeness and a bountiful harvest is promised. I love the turning of the seasons, but not before we've had our summer social. The sun beat down on the Middle Nene Sailing Club and once again, the Social Team excelled with a wonderful selection of meats and salads beautifully presented. We all owe them our thanks for working so hard while the rest of us enjoyed the fruits of their labour. This is not a one-day affair, but involves weeks of planning, sourcing and preparing.

We first used the Sailing Club as a venue in 2013. We had barbeques for the first 2 years and as I was working as a chef at the time, I got nominated to cook it? We used the club's barbeque which was on the terrace. What I didn't appreciate, was how much fat had accumulated in the bottom over months/years of use. Whilst cooking, this combusted in an enormous fire. Attempts to quell the flames failed and eventually a bucket of water was needed to put it out before everyone's lunch and possibly the terrace, went up in smoke. In those days, we had trips round the lake on real sailing boats. The favourite was a Broads Cruiser beautifully restored and maintained, in which we toured the lake. This was before longer, hotter summers and water temperatures, choked the lake with weed every summer.

After the success of the Sports Evening in June, we are proposing to put on 2 additional social events each year, one in June and a second in October. However, in the democratic spirit of u3a we want to know what you would like them to be. So our Publicity Rep' – Glyn Hill – is putting together a survey to solicit your views and ideas. Not just about the new social events, but about what we as Thrapston u3a are doing well and not so well. These will be emailed to you all, please take a couple of minutes to contribute your ideas and either email them back, or bring them to the following Plaza meeting.

At our November meeting we have a visit by Iain Cassidy, CEO of the Third Age Trust, the governing body of the u3a. Iain will be reflecting on his experiences as CEO and is expected to talk for about 15 minutes. So we don't steal time from our scheduled speaker, the meeting will begin at the earlier time of 10:15. Please make a note and come early. The doors will be open from 9:45am.,,,,,,Enjoy your Newsletter *Frank*



Monthly Meetings

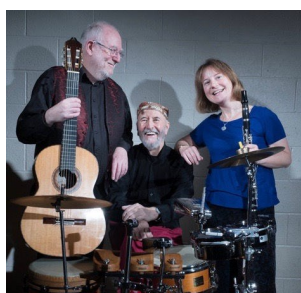
19th September & 17th October 2025 presentation



How to Love Poetry

19th September: Speaker Bert Flitcroft

Bert Flitcroft was born and brought up in Lancashire but now lives in the Midlands. A graduate of Sheffield University, he is an experienced and accomplished poet who for some time has been quietly and unassumingly spreading the poetry word as teacher, mentor, work shop leader, poet-in-residence, and reader. He has four collections of poetry published: 'Thought-Apples', 'Singing Puccini at the Kitchen Sink', 'Just Asking', and 'Seeing the Light



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.

u3a Silver Wheelers – Motorcycle Group

The very name conjures up a variety of different images in the minds of those who hear it but in the absence of any suitable and polite alternatives it will have to suffice. The name was not my invention and I can only guess that as an adjective 'silver' refers to the hair of the group members but in some cases, there is clearly no silver to be seen there.

Alternatively I suppose it might refer to the considerable amount of 'silver' that is handed over to acquire and maintain these shiny machines or possibly even the shininess itself of the chrome and polished aluminium often seen on a motorcycle but for the most part my BMW is generally black all over but not disqualified on this account.

So, what's in a name anyway? And 'wheelers' can be reasonably applied, when all is said and done because motorcycles generally (but not always) have two each.

The u3a group exists to enjoy the experiences and exhilaration of motor cycling and it is achieved with the very minimum of fuss. The objective of the group seems to me to be mostly pleasurable rides but is also a forum for exchanging information as well as a fair amount of boasting of individual long since past achievements.

These days and mostly at this time of year there are a plethora of biker's clubs offering special events and opportunities to ride out visiting distant cafes in search of the perfect coffee and bacon sandwich. There's plenty of choice with farms and garden centres, forced to diversify their activities that now frequently have a café and there are still 'greasy spoons' to be found operating from shipping containers in laybys on trunk roads offering low priced sustenance if you aren't too bothered about the view.

The 'Silver Wheelers' of our u3a have embraced the spirit of this activity and in recent times have made visits to Launde Abbey in Leicestershire, Houghton Mill, Huntingdon, Coates, Cambridgeshire. At the beginning of August, we made a visit to 'Wheels Café' in Peterborough's Eastern Industrial area which is a cluster of bike dealerships such as Honda Kawasaki, Suzuki, Yamaha and Aprilla. I mentioned the view earlier in this article and the scene, here was amazing with so many bikes, it's much too easy to fall in love at first sight!

We have a routine programme of ride outs, always on the second Friday in the month starting from Thrapston Coop car park at 10.00am with the one on 8th August visiting the premises of Hambleton Bakery coffee shop, Exton, Rutland which is sited in a beautiful landscape some considerable distance from any trunk road.

New members are naturally welcome to join the group and occasional guests but all must be test passed bike owners on road legal machines. An added incentive is the total lack subscriptions to become a member. If you need any more info please don't hesitate to ask, we may not know the answer to your query but may be able to think up something that sounds reasonably believable.

Paul Ollett

Pictures taken at the Coates Show



Free Mature Drivers Roadshow - Reminder 16 September 2025 - Daventry

Are you a mature driver (aged 60+)?
Live in Northamptonshire? Rely on being able to drive?
This FREE roadshow 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 Roadshow is aimed at drivers 60+, and will cover all different aspects of driving. There will be a short talk and then plenty of time to meet informally with our many stand holders.

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

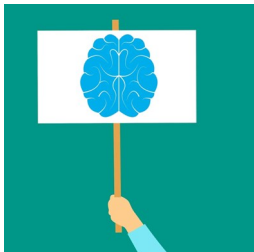
Our aim is to keep mature drivers driving safer, for longer.

Book your Free tickets via
Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/northants-mature-driver-roadshows-4099083>

The event is being held at The Icon Innovation Centre, Eastern Way, Daventry NN11 0QB
(what3words.com/reduce.stealthier.handbags) with two sessions, 9.30am and 1.00pm.

A poem written by Penny Smith as this month's talk is about poetry

*Retirement they say
Slowing down they say
Not with Thrapston U3A!
New ideas to tickle your brain
So many things we can't complain
Hobbies, games new friends to meet
Having fun with U3A is difficult to beat!*



Keeping your Brain Happy and Healthy

By Helen Dawson

Are you an Orchid or a Dandelion?

Have you ever noticed, some people can just thrive, no matter what life throws at them, whilst others can struggle at the merest hint of disruption?

'Dandelions' can thrive anywhere, and 'orchids' need a little more nurturing. Of course, we all have a few traits in either, but most people are dominant in one or the other.

Check to see which you are here <https://uquiz.com/quiz/wJcHmx/dandelion-vs-orchid-child>

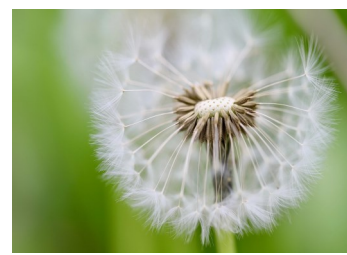
If you are an orchid like me, start to note down what in life gives you pleasure, what calms you and makes you ready to face the world?

On your list might be - I only feel able to face the day once I've done my yoga or long run, your list might include that you need regular holidays, time with friends etc.

Make a list like your rules to live by, how to keep yourself nurtured in your own, very specific way, will help keep those stress hormones at bay.

To get you started here's some of my list (I am an Orchid) and this is what I need to thrive...

- Time outside in nature
- Time with friends
- Being fit and healthy as much as possible
- Being creative
- Having structure and plans
- Alone time but not too much
- Being near water, lake, sea, river etc
- Interestingly, to help me thrive, I need a dandelion as a partner not another orchid.



Lots of the above I learned via workshops and time with Caroline Prout, our local hypotherapist. More details about her and how to work with her are here :

<https://inspiredtochange.biz/hypnotherapists/thrapston-hypnotherapy/>

Short Quiz — Answer on Page 8

| | |
|----|--|
| 1 | Who was the first child to be born to the Queen after she was crowned |
| 2 | Which Eurovision Song Contest winner stood in the presidential elections in 1997 |
| 3 | How many signs are there in the Chinese Horoscope |
| 4 | Who became Lord Protector of England, Scotland and Ireland in 1653 |
| 5 | What are the highest waterfalls called |
| 6 | In which section of an orchestra would you find the Piccola |
| 7 | In which US state is the top secret "Area 51" located |
| 8 | How is the Roman city of Verulamium known today |
| 9 | Gardeners Delight is a variety of what |
| 10 | What is the collective name for a group of Partridges |



UKULELE GROUP - JUST FOR FUN

Have you ever thought about learning to play the ukulele?

This instrument is one of the easiest to play – it has only four strings and we (most of us anyway) have four fingers – that must be a good start wouldn't you think! Playing the ukulele is a very social activity, good for both body and soul and a whole lot of fun too. Equally, once you have learnt the basics you can play at home maybe strumming along to a YouTube video or one of your favourite tracks

The Ukulele Group is currently seeking new members either absolute beginners or experienced musicians. If you are hesitating because you have never played the ukulele or, indeed, any musical instrument before please do not be shy. Most of the current members of this group, me included, had no previous experience but found it both easy and stimulating.

I am also happy to spend some one-to-one time with you to show you the basics, if requested. Once you have the basic skills under your belt there are endless tuition videos (all free) on the internet plus help from me and the other group members leaving no need to take expensive lessons elsewhere.

I have a small selection of ukuleles and other equipment available to borrow before you commit. Ukuleles are inexpensive to buy; you can pick up a basic instrument for under £30.

If you would like to give it a go or would like more information, give me a call to have a chat or drop me an email

The group currently meets bi-monthly on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday mornings at my home but, if enough members sign up and require it, the meeting time could be changed to 1st and 3rd Wednesday afternoons at Thrapston Baptist Church from 1.30 to 3pm.

Due to holidays the next meeting is scheduled for October 14th at my home.

Marion

Tel: 07989 985722

marion.u3aukuleles@gmail.com





Tricia James—A Career in Nursing'

Part 1 From Nurse Pat to Staff Nurse French .

Apart from being a St John's Ambulance nursing cadet my first 'nursing' experience took place during the summer break from Hitchin Girl's Grammar School in the early 1960s when for 4 weeks I went to The Redhouse Hospital in Harpenden. I was known as Nurse Pat and allocated at first to the 'geriatric' ward (as it was called then). I didn't like it and so after a short time I was moved to the Maternity ward with strong instructions that I was not to go into the labour ward, where of course all the exciting things happened or at least I thought so.

I lived for the 4 weeks in the nurses' home and ate in the hospital dining room with all the other nurses and Matron. We were not allowed to leave the table until Matron did and had to stand when she entered or left. I was given breakfast in bed by a hospital maid on my one day off each week. I have no evidence how or why I was taken on by the Red House or information on what I actually did apart from some vague memories and a lovely scrapbook of Thank You cards from the patients. It was an awe inspiring experience for a very young and inexperienced girl.



In September 1965 I started my nurse training at Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge, a vastly different experience when compared to that of the student nurse today. For a start on our first day we were not only given six very starched white aprons but also a starched white cotton cap to be pleated and sewn into shape, making sense of the needle and white cotton we were asked to bring with us.

For the first year we lived in Owlstone Croft – a home for student nurses run by a warden called Miss Law who lived up to her name. Our rooms were examined each morning to ensure all was clean and tidy and Miss Law left a typed note if she found anything amiss. We had to be in by 10pm even though that meant that during our first year no student nurse ever saw the end of a film at the local cinema! No men were allowed in the room even family members and therefore my Dad was prevented from delivering my large suitcase to my room, instead he had to wait in a small meeting room inside the front door where male relatives could wait or couples could meet. It and the front door were within sight of Miss Law's office so she could vet those coming in and out. During our 2nd and 3rd year four of us shared a house in Cambridge and enjoyed the freedom even though the £13 a month which we were paid did not go far.



We had a four week block of tutorials each year, but the majority of our learning took place mainly on the wards. This time was divided into 3 month periods usually on a ward but could also be in a speciality such as theatres or outpatients and could be night duty. In our 1st year, our experience largely consisted of bed making, cleaning (damp dusting!) and bandage rolling. Our 'home' in the wards was the sluice where we spent many hours cleaning and shining metal bedpans and caring for the vast number of flowers on patients' lockers. In our 2nd year we were introduced to care of patients and the third year practice consisted of ward management. Unlike today's degree students, we were considered to be part of the workforce and care needs came first and we were 'used' to fill in gaps in nursing staff. For example, I was assigned to a 15-patient cancer therapy unit on night duty for my first 2nd year practice because the scheduled night nurse was off sick. I was the only nurse on the ward and terrified! My support was a night sister who would eventually come if I needed help. More reliable was the 3rd year student nurse who came to relieve me for meal breaks. She answered any questions I had and taught me a great deal.

Contd on next page.



Tricia James—A Career in Nursing'

Part 1 From Nurse Pat to Staff Nurse French contd

I had a wide and varied experience which included caring for patients undergoing renal dialysis or following a kidney or liver transplant (a new procedure in the late 1960s). I also worked on a neurosurgical ward at the new Addenbrookes hospital. At that time we had three patients who were being kept cool to slow the brain activity whilst they recovered from a brain injury or surgery. These rooms were very cold and I was grateful for my nurses' cape and for the three patients being slowly 'warmed up' whose rooms were very hot. It was not until my third year that I worked on both a general medical and a general surgical ward providing essential knowledge and experience for the final examinations.

In November 1968 I passed my final exams and was added to the register of State Registered Nurses (SRN) and with it came many exciting career opportunities. For my first job in order to consolidate my practice and learning, I chose a staff nurse post on the Gynaecology and post transplant ward which had been my last practice placement.

Along with my certificate from the GNC I was also given a permit to buy a registered nurses uniform and a SRN badge together with a lovely silver badge from Addenbrookes but unfortunately both were later stolen in a burglary. Neither are given any more and could not therefore be replaced. As an SRN at Addenbrookes Hospital I also had to wear a Staff Nurse's hat – a white highly starched cotton confection which was pinned to the top of the head and stood 10 – 12 inches high. Not very practical for patient care!

Nurse training has changed in many ways since the 1960s especially the change in status from member of the workforce with the emphasis on care (albeit inadequate and inexperienced at times) to that of student with an emphasis on learning. Starched aprons and caps have gone, uniform dresses are no longer measured, prayers are no longer said in the wards each Sunday, and as far as I know consultants no longer visit their ward on Christmas day to carve the turkey for patients. Wards are busier and patients less well today and are not expected to do the tea or cocoa round. For the visits of the ward sister, Matron or the Consultant, patients no longer have to be in bed with the sheets clean and tidy and the top sheet turnover exactly 18 inches. Removal of many of these practices was welcomed but the loss of the element of 'fun' which we experienced in large measure was mourned by those who had trained in the 60s and early 70s.

Part 2 Next month



Answer to Quiz

| | | | |
|---|------------------------|----|---------------|
| 1 | Prince Andrew in 1960 | 6 | Woodwind |
| 2 | Dana | 7 | Nevada |
| 3 | 12 | 8 | St Albans |
| 4 | Oliver Cromwell | 9 | Cherry Tomato |
| 5 | Angel Falls, Venezuela | 10 | A Covey |

Butterfly & Bird Watching report

Wednesday 6th August and the venue for our trip was Fermyn Woods Country Park, the morning sun was shining and with a warm breeze, good conditions to see some of the parks lovely species of butterflies.

The country park was a former sand pit the which has been transformed into a wonderful haven for nature with meadows, ponds, hills, woodland trails and surrounded by the remains of the ancient Rockingham forest.

We set off from the cafe past the playground on the path towards the woods, the meadow alongside the path was still in flower with the Common Blue butterfly's favourite nectar source the Birds Foot Trefoil in abundance. We spotted some Small White butterflies flitting around, then finally a couple of Common Blues made an appearance, although small their vibrant blue colour more than makes up for their size. A Clouded Yellow butterfly was also spotted which is a rare migrant from Europe and great to see.

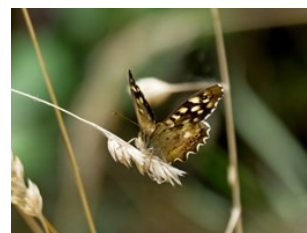


A Common Blue



A Clouded Yellow

We entered the woods hoping to see some of the woodland butterflies the place is known for, we soon encountered a lovely male Speckled Wood butterfly perched on a low branch waiting for a female of the species. As we walked along a Buzzard swooped through the trees by us and took up a roost high above and began calling to two other Buzzards circling over the woods and it was a lovely sight to see. None of the other woodland butterflies such as the Silver Washed Fritillary or White Admiral were to be seen but there's always next time.

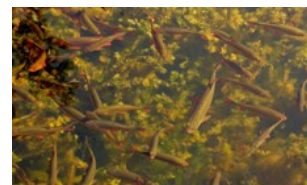


Speckled Wood



Common Darter

The path took us out of the woods and we headed to the "Big pond", although it is really quite small, there were a number of Common Darter dragonflies around the pond with the female of a mated pair laying eggs in the water as they skimmed the surface. There was a shoal of small Rudd which took the pieces of bread we fed to them.



Rudd



Small White

Time was getting on so we headed off across the meadow, some Small White butterflies were seen and the odd moth, at the end of the meadow is another pond and a few Damsel flies and a couple of dragonflies were patrolling the margins, a pair of Tree creeper's were spotted climbing up a tree by the pond but were out of site before we could get a photo.

We all enjoyed our walk at such a lovely place, thanks to everyone who came and also to Colin and Paul for the photos.

Bob Simpson



***** **NEW GROUP** *****

Yoga Group Begins...

Our much-awaited yoga group is set to begin, the details are below.

First class is Thursday 11th September

Just turn up with your yoga mat – if you want to try out the group but don't yet have a mat, please bring a towel, as the venue does have a nice thick carpet.

YOGA GROUP
THURSDAYS 1 – 2 o'clock
Thrapston Baptist Church – Upstairs
£2 per class

Group Information

There is some interest in starting the following groups.

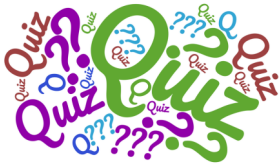
Line Dancing
Choir Group
Book Club



If you are interested in any of these you can show an 'Expression of Interest' at the Plaza meeting, a sheet will be available for this. It is interest only and not a commitment, as depending on the response a day and time of the meeting will be decided by the group. The group will need a leader and I can assist anyone who will take this on.

The Table Tennis group that meets on Tuesday and Thursday cannot take anymore members at the present time.

Polly Johnson
Group Co-Ordinator



Mayors Quiz & Chips night.

During the evening of Saturday 30th August, Thrapston U3A entered three teams into the Mayor's Charity Quiz and Chips night at the Plaza. About 25 teams including our three entered. And between us we didn't do too badly.

It started with two picture quizzes to identify, one with photos of parts of local places and the other showed a variety of board and indoor games.

The main quiz comprised eight category sections with each team having a double point joker that could be played before the commencement of any round. Subjects included geography, literature, numbers, politics and each was preceded by a piece of popular music to be identified.

Our three teams were the All Stars, Rollers and Chancers and, although one team won the booby prize, the other two gained 6th and a very creditable 2nd place, just half a point behind the victors.

Our thanks to Paul Ollett who organised the teams and to the 14 members who put themselves forward. A very enjoyable evening was slightly dampened by a walk home in the rain but I for one will certainly have another go, should another Quiz Night be put on.

Eric



Members Survey

On the 6 September 2025 a survey was sent to ask our members about their views and experiences since joining our U3A . The feedback will be invaluable in helping us to improve our U3A.

Please note that the form cannot be filled in online due to the format in which it had to be sent.

If you are unable to print the form off and/or send it to our publicity officer (publicity1thrapstonu3a@gmail.com, or have not received a copy, paper copies will be available at the next plaza meeting on the 19th September.

Completed copies can either be handed in to your Group Leader or at the plaza meetings on 19th September and the 17th October .



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.

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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**



Thrapston & District U3A is a registered charity number 1179593