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### *Chairman's Message*

#### *Are we nearly there yet?*



Within the next few weeks we should return to what is regarded as normal. With that normality hopefully we should begin to see our U3A awaken like Cinderella from her sleep.

Who gets to play the Prince?. Why YOU and each and every member of our U3A by returning to group activities, by coming to the 'real' Plaza meetings starting in September.

As a starter to face to face meetings, the U3A Day stall at the June Farmers Market was a beginning, as will be the Summer Social. This year we are trying something a touch different.

On 20<sup>th</sup> August our U3A will hold a "Drop In Coffee Morning" 10.30-12.00 in the outside area of the Kings Arms in Thrapston High Street. Come and join us for a chat, coffee (other beverages are available) and snacks will be provide at the normal charge by the venue,. If you chose to extend your stay with lunch and taste the delights coming from the newly installed pizza oven that would be a personal decision.

Hope to see you all in person very soon?

Ian Byrnes

Chairman



## *Review of the 18th June 2021 Zoom Presentation*

### *“Life in the Music by Andy Smith*



This was the third visit made to our group by Andy Smith and his presentation was as fresh as ever. With his prepared video presentation he took us on a journey through his musical career including very personal insights into his private and family life which could easily have led to the title of the presentation being renamed Love in the Music.

Andy got his first guitar at the age of 11 and began writing songs about a year later, recording them in MP3 format. Some years later he took his first U3A engagement with Bedworth group but it posed two questions for him. One he didn't know what U3A was and two he didn't know what to do or say. He is a quick learner and decided that he would theme his talk with a catalogue his life in his songs. Using this format also formed the core of his presentation to Thrapston U3A.

Andy was born and grew up in Lincoln. His parents said he was an unhappy baby always yelling during his waking hours and said his son was just the same which led him to write a song called the 'Baby Blues', which he performed for us. Written in a humorous vein describing the trials and tribulations of managing infants from birth onwards. He eagerly anticipated visits to Lincoln by traveling funfairs and circuses and his next song, with his mandolin accompaniment was called 'Big Top' reflected his enthusiasm for the circus.

Among his collection of stringed instruments is an unusual 4 stringed Tenor Guitar, popular with folk music artists and an American 'Ovation' Andy has acquired an array of instruments including a Ukulele all of which he handles with great care and affection.

His presentation was spiced with anecdotes including references to the first band he formed with two girl singers (one only 14 years old) and two other musicians with the band management being handled by Andy's Mum who he was pleased to tell was still with us, now aged 96 years old. Her favourite song being the Gordon Lightfoot number 'Leaving on a Jet Plane'.

We heard of Andy's early encounters with alcohol as a young musician playing the pubs and revealing the humorous times and pitfalls of the experience in a song about getting drunk and 'Going for an Indian Meal'.

Andy was married to Helen, a graphic artist and illustrator of children's books who originated from Manchester, she was clearly the love of his life for 33 years and they have a son and daughter now in their early thirties but so sadly Helen passed away and the pain was very evident when Andy sang the Don MacLean number 'Vincent' which had been her favourite song.

Now resident in Rugby where he has been for many years Andy cut his teeth on the folk scene often performing at The Dun Cow, Daventry in a small theatre at the rear of the pub on Sunday evenings as a 'floor singer'. Basically the warm up act for bigger names which were the main event. This later inspired him to write a folk song 'Girl with the Innocent Smile'.

Eventually after several mostly unsatisfactory years of working for Nat West bank Andy set up his own business giving Guitar lessons and this gave him the idea to write a song about tutoring two young hopefuls that contained two verses one of which we were assured was true and the other not true and we were left to decide for ourselves which was which. The final song of this excellent presentation was called 'Lullaby' dedicated to his children with a verse for each.

Andy's presentation and video was produced in his home studio, formerly used by Helen for her artistic works. It was a fascinating musical biography and a great pleasure for all. I am sure we will meet again.

*Review by Paul Ollett  
Speaker Seeker*





*An introduction to the talk to be presented via Zoom on the*

*16 July 2021*

*Not to be missed so don't forget to book your ticket*



**16 July 2021**



**Steve Dimmer**  
**Life of Ronnie Barker**

Steve is a locally based and accomplished speaker who has entertained us in person on two previous occasions with his first visit in January 2015 and more recently when he brought his presentation on Victoria Wood.

Steve, by Zoom, now brings us a hilarious presentation, which reflects the very British comedian and comedy script writer Ronnie Barker with his very British style of humour.

It is indeed an affectionate look at the life of one of Britain's most loved and talented comedy actors. Liberally illustrated with clips from his career – Four Candles anyone?



*To watch this presentation please see the guidelines below*

Go to our website, [www.thrapstonu3a.co.uk](http://www.thrapstonu3a.co.uk), and click the link on the **HOME PAGE** to order your ticket.

Each member can order one ticket for one device only. There are 92 tickets available and you will be able to join the meeting from **10.10 am**.

A link for the meeting will be sent by email the evening before the meeting.

Guidance on using zoom can be found on the event page by clicking the ticket link on the website

### ***Membership Cards Reminder***

Please remember to have your membership card with you when you attend meetings or outings.

The reverse of the card has space for contact details to be used in case of an emergency.

Your membership number is also required when booking an outing or buying tickets for an event.



# Thrapston & District



Roger (Our Publicity Officer) created some posters for the day and they were put up at various points round Thrapston and Raunds for June 2nd (National U3A Day). There was also a display board of information in the library.



However, Thrapston is not very busy on a Wednesday and we therefore decided to have a stall at the Farmers Market the following Saturday. This was highly successful..

The weather was glorious and there were lots of people out and about enjoying the sunshine and the market.



The quilt made by the Stitchers Group was a useful point of discussion.

It was lovely to finally meet up with some members face to face (Socially distanced of course) and to be able to update them on what was planned for the rest of the year. We also met those who had not heard of us and recruited new members.

We are also looking forward to getting our "stall" I out again at the rescheduled Thrapston Charter Fair in September, See you there.

Sheila Underwood  
Vice Chair





## Theatre Group

I am now starting to put together theatre trips for next year and have reserved 25 premium seats (front stalls) to see a matinee performance of **Singing in the Rain** at the Birmingham Hippodrome on **Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022**. Although this may seem a long way off in the future, I do have to confirm numbers and pay for the tickets by the end of September.

At the moment all I am asking is for those of you who are interested to contact me (preferably by email ~ [peterandjeanmole@btinternet.com](mailto:peterandjeanmole@btinternet.com)) or alternatively by phone 01933 626608 so that I can see how many members would like to go. The price would be between £59 & £64 (*dependant on numbers*), to include a mini coach there & back.

## Days Out

**Royal Courts of Justice (£33)** ~ Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> August.

We still have limited availability for this trip, which includes a guided tour of the Royal Courts of Justice & free time in Covent Garden.



**Highclere Castle (£35)** ~ 1<sup>st</sup> September. We are fully booked for this trip, However if you are interested we will put you on the reserve list ~ but no promises!

**Thursford Christmas Spectacular ~ £55 to £60** (*dependant on numbers*). We have booked a 2pm matinee performance on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December with centre seats facing the main stage, (*rows N, O & P*). This is the biggest and most exciting Christmas show in Britain with dazzling dancers, beautiful costumes, Christmas songs and carols and a cast of over one hundred. Each show is a pageant of spectacle and colour. A brilliant day out. We have also organised a comfort stop for fish and chips on the way home (*payable separately*).



## The New Lunch Club

Unfortunately Covid restrictions prevented us from meeting in the Plaza on the 7th July where I was going to discuss with you my ideas for the New Lunch Club, and get your suggestions for great lunchtime venues that you have enjoyed. I am currently organising an alternative date so that we can all meet up soon to exchange information. I will advise you of the new meeting date shortly.

I already have 20 members who are interested in joining me for convivial lunches. The first of these will be at The Woolpack in Islip at 12:00 for 12:30 on Wednesday 11th August. If you haven't already put your name down for this, please contact me on [peterandjeanmole@btinternet.com](mailto:peterandjeanmole@btinternet.com) or phone 01933 626608, and I will forward you a copy of the menu so that you can make your choices. (I am sure that I don't need to tell you that all menus are pre-booked with the restaurant and you cannot just turn up on the day!) Payment will be due on the day ~ please bring cash or cheque.

Following, this our next lunch will be at The White Horse in Tilbrook on Wednesday 8th September at 12:00 for 12:30. Again, please contact me to register your interest and receive a copy of the menu.

Jean Mole

## TREACLE SPONGE

Serves 6-8

- 3 tbsp golden syrup, plus 3-4 tbsp extra to serve
- 175g self-raising flour
- 1 rounded tsp baking powder
- 175g very soft butter
- 3 large eggs
- 175g soft light brown sugar
- 1 tbsp black treacle



- ◆ Butter a 1-2 litre pudding basin well. Cut a double thickness of kitchen foil approximately 30 x 40 cms
- ◆ Grease a tablespoon and measure the 3 tbsp golden syrup into the pudding basin.
- ◆ Sift the flour and baking powder into large mixing bowl and add the soft butter, eggs, sugar and black treacle. Using an electric hand whisk (or large fork and a lot of elbow grease) beat the mixture for about 2 minutes or until thoroughly blended..
- ◆ Spoon the mixture into the basin and use the back of a spoon to level the top.
- ◆ Cover the basin with the foil, making a pleat in the centre. Pull the foil down the outside of the basin and tie in place around the rim with string, taking the string over the top and tying it on the other side making a handle. Trim off the excess foil all the way round.
- ◆ Place the pudding in a steamer fitted over a saucepan of boiling water and steam the pudding for 2 hours, checking the water level halfway through.
- ◆ To serve, loosen the pudding all around using a palette knife, invert it onto a warmed plate and pour the extra syrup over the top before taking it to the table..
- ◆ Serve with custard or ice cream.

*Happy Baking*

*Viv Tunstall*

## NEW - U3A CHESS NETWORK

CHESS CAN BE ENJOYABLE (& GOOD FOR YOU)



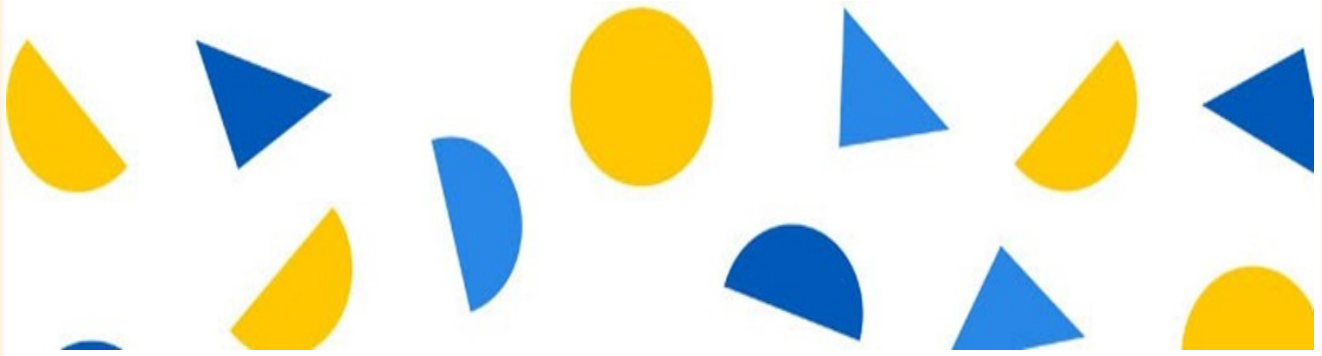
There is little doubt that playing a game of chess improves concentration, memory, decision making and spatial comprehension.

There is now support for a u3a CHESS NETWORK .

If you are interested you can join by going to [www.u3aChessNetwork.org.uk](http://www.u3aChessNetwork.org.uk).

It is also possible to use this site to register for the u3a Chess League starting in September.

The Chess Subject Adviser is David Castle.



## Summer Social Get-together!

Great news for members of Thrapston & District u3a!

We shall have a Summer Social Gathering in August when we can all meet safely in a large openspace with tables and chairs, enjoy conversation, swap news and have a drink.

### When?

Friday August 20<sup>th</sup>,  
10.30am to 12.00.

### Where?

The King's Arms  
courtyard,  
Thrapston

Please make sure you bring your u3a membership card as well as safety masks, sanitiser, etc.

*We are indebted to Chris and Mary, landlords of the King's Arms, for allowing us to use their premises and for having tea and coffee on sale.*

On Friday September 17<sup>TH</sup>, we plan to hold our first Monthly Meeting since February 2020 at The Plaza in Thrapston.



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 2020/21***

Chair: Ian Byrnes	<a href="mailto:chairmanthrapstonu3a@gmail.com">chairmanthrapstonu3a@gmail.com</a>
Vice Chair: Sheila Underwood	<a href="mailto:vicechairthrapstonu3a@gmail.com">vicechairthrapstonu3a@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer: Sue Campbell	<a href="mailto:treasurerthrapstonu3a@gmail.com">treasurerthrapstonu3a@gmail.com</a>
Secretary: Wendy Davies	<a href="mailto:secretarythrapstonu3a@gmail.com">secretarythrapstonu3a@gmail.com</a>
Groups Co-ordinator: Anna Bond	<a href="mailto:groupsthrapstonu3a@gmail.com">groupsthrapstonu3a@gmail.com</a>
Membership Registrar: Pauline Dennison	<a href="mailto:membershipthrapstonu3a@gmail.com">membershipthrapstonu3a@gmail.com</a>
Speaker Seeker: Paul Ollett	<a href="mailto:speakersthrapstonu3a@gmail.com">speakersthrapstonu3a@gmail.com</a>
Newsletter Editor: Tina Jones	<a href="mailto:editorthrapstonu3a@gmail.com">editorthrapstonu3a@gmail.com</a>
Publicity & Facebook: Roger Davies	<a href="mailto:publicitythrapstonu3a@gmail.com">publicitythrapstonu3a@gmail.com</a>
IT Operations/Website Manager: Neil Busby	<a href="mailto:websitethrapstonu3a@gmail.com">websitethrapstonu3a@gmail.com</a>
Plaza Welcome Manager: Viv Tunstall	<a href="mailto:welcomethrapstonu3a@gmail.com">welcomethrapstonu3a@gmail.com</a>

#### ***Off Committee Roles 2020/2021***

<i>Access Advisor: Glyn Hill</i>	<a href="mailto:accessthrapstonu3a@gmail.com">accessthrapstonu3a@gmail.com</a>
<i>Social Committee Liaison: Sheila Underwood</i>	
<i>Zoom "Plaza" Meeting Host: Neil Mathieson</i>	

### **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 first Friday in the month.**

Editor and publisher : Tina Jones - email: [editorthrapstonu3a@gmail.com](mailto:editorthrapstonu3a@gmail.com)

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*