



Thrapston & District u3a

NEWSLETTER

June 2026



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Musings from the Chairman

What a month: Annual General Meeting (AGM), the speaker going into hospital the day before, hottest day ever recorded in May, followed by biblical floods in Thrapston. I think I can finish now! Seriously though, thanks to all of you who came to our AGM. It was a massive turnout of 107. I know you really came to see Andy Smith and probably thought of going home again when he didn't appear, but Steve Dimmer valiantly stepped in with little notice to fill the void and did a great job. Well done our Speaker Seeker. Sorry folks, but no refunds.



To our departing committee members: Viv Tunstall, Bob Simpson, Pauline Johnson and Eric Franklin a massive thank you for their time, energy and hard work given to support this great u3a community of ours. To those joining us: Dave Tolmie, Tony Lomer-Cross, Elaine Scott and Theresa Wood, a massive welcome. Your energy, skills, knowledge and experience will boost our abilities as a committee yet further and will certainly keep me on my toes. I know most of you will think being on the committee is some kind of penance, but it's stimulating, rewarding and most importantly, fun. As the saying goes: "Don't knock it till you've tried it" and you're very welcome to sit in on any of our meetings and share the experience.

June is going to be another exciting month, with our Sports Evening on the 12 th, a Northants network meeting on the 26 th and the Charter Fair on the 28 th . No time to sit around watching Cash in the Attic! I know most of you will wander down to the Charter Fair sometime during the day; be sure to call in at our gazebo and say hello. Even better, bring a friend or neighbour who would benefit from joining, there'll be lots of information available. This year we are giving away free 'Mystery Books' to potential members visiting our stall, with a u3a information leaflet inside, naturally. Meanwhile, the Press Gang will be mixing with the crowds, waylaying anyone who looks over 50.

I hope to see you there and have a chat about your experience of u3a.

Regards

Frank

Monthly Meetings

Our monthly meetings are held at the Plaza Thrapston, on the third Friday in the month, from 10.00 to 12.00.

Doors open at 9.45, and the cost is £1 for members and £3 for visitors, to include refreshments

This month's speaker is : **Michael Burton** **19th June**

The River Trent — England's Heart



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.

Next month's speaker is : **Rob Brewer** **17th July**

The Life of an Extra

Rob has been a TV/Film Extra for 6 years having been in over 40 different features. From Hollywood Blockbusters (Batman, Bond, Wonder Woman) low budget films to TV dramas, soaps and comedies and even a couple of adverts.

He talks about some of the productions that he has been in, explaining how he became involved in the industry and how anyone can do it.



August Meeting - Thrapston and District U3A Social Group invite you to Thrapston Sailing Club, August 21st 2026.



The buffet lunch at the Sailing Club for the Summer event, replaces the meeting at the Plaza on Friday 21st August.

Tickets will be on sale at the June meeting. The cost is £10.00 and the ticket includes a raffle.

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

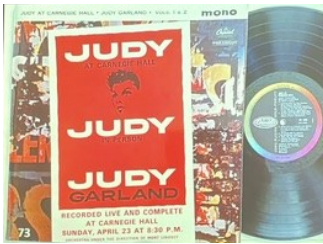
Monthly Meetings

Our May speaker stepped in at the last minute, due to illness of our originally booked speaker. Steve Dimmer stepped in to give us an interesting insight into the life of.....

Judy Garland

Judy Garland remains one of the most admired and tragic figures in entertainment history.

Born Frances Ethel Gumm in 1922, she began performing as a child alongside her sisters in a vaudeville act before being signed by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Her remarkable voice, emotional depth, and natural screen presence quickly made her a star during Hollywood's golden age.



Garland became internationally famous through her role as Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*. Her performance of the song "Over the Rainbow" became legendary and is still regarded as one of the finest musical moments in cinema history.

Audiences connected with her warmth, vulnerability, and sincerity, qualities that set her apart from many performers of the era.

During the 1940s and 1950s, Garland starred in successful musicals including "Meet Me in St. Louis" and "A Star Is Born". Despite her professional success, she struggled throughout her life with exhaustion, addiction, and the intense pressures placed upon young actors by the studio system. Long working hours and demands to maintain a certain appearance took a heavy toll on her health and wellbeing.



Even during difficult periods, Garland's talent never disappeared. Her live concerts, especially at Carnegie Hall in 1961, were celebrated for their emotional honesty and extraordinary vocal power.

Many critics consider that performance one of the greatest nights in popular music history.



Judy Garland died in 1969 at the age of forty-seven, yet her influence continues today. She is remembered not only as a gifted singer and actress, but also as a symbol of resilience, humanity, and timeless artistry.

Review by Dave Tolmie

U3a News

The Third Age Trust - Writing Competition



Our essay competition is now live and, this year, we want to know about the real life journeys that fascinate you.

That could be :

a historic voyage,

a world-changing expedition,

a scientific breakthrough

a spiritual or intellectual journey.

We can't wait to see what you come up with.

The deadline is Friday 31 July. The writers of the top three essays will receive books donated by HX Expeditions. Find out how to get involved on our learning pages, <https://www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/learning/learning-activities/essay-competition-2026>

New Members



A very warm welcome to the following new members.

Debbie Grummit

James Read

Delia Read

Alison Tye

Hilary Sutton

News from the Groups

New Groups New Groups New Groups New Groups New Groups

Art Appreciation

The group will meet on the first Thursday of each month– 2.30 to 4.00 and each member will take it in turns to host the session.

There will be a variety of formats, including bring a piece of art that you love, an artist focus, visits to galleries and studios. Perhaps even a London trip..

The first meeting will take place on Thursday July 2nd and Kelly will host it at her home in Thrapston when the focus will be on her husband Paul's work as an illustrator.

Please email Glyn (groupsthrapstonu3a@gmail.com) if you'd like to join the group.

News from the Groups

New Groups New Groups New Groups New Groups New Groups

Golf

Twelve people have signed up for this group and we have a Group Leader, Mary Clark. The venue will be Pytchley Golf Club in Kettering on the first and third Fridays of the month in the afternoon. Prices are £9 for over 65s and £12 for under for 9 holes.



Pytchley is very popular on Fridays and Mary has initially booked for 4 players on the 19 th June and 3 rd July. The places will be allocated via a poll vote. More tee times will be booked according to interest.

If you'd like to join the group, please email Mary.clark.147@btinternet.com

Current Issues

The group leaders are Peter Baden and Glyn Hill and we have seven members with room for three more. We will meet once a month on the second Monday afternoon 2.30-4 starting on 10 th August when the topic will be 'Prisons'. The following topics have been suggested but will be flexible since the hot topics of the time may well change:

Assisted dying,

The Mental Health epidemic,

Children and Smart Phones,

The Armed Forces/ Defence spending,

NHS – fit for purpose,

Football – hooliganism and racism.



Please contact glynishill06@gmail.com to join the group.

Novice Gardeners

Jay Parker and Pauline Wright are our group leaders. The group will be meeting on the second Monday afternoon of the month and at present there are six members with room for more.



Ideas for topics include; cuttings, pruning, plant swaps, gardening calendars,

bulbs, hanging baskets and pots, diseases and pests and grass.

Please contact Jay jayparker12@msn.com or Pauline paulinewright@dragonflames.plus.com if you'd like to join the group.

News from the Groups

New Groups New Groups New Groups New Groups New Groups

Outdoor Bowling



The outdoor bowling group is up and running and they've had their first meeting! Islip Bowling Club have welcomed us to join in their Monday afternoon play and our group will meet there on the first and third Mondays; 2 until 4, until mid-September. They met for the first time on 1 st June and I understand it was really enjoyable. The charge is £4 per person and bowls and technical support is provided. There is room for more members, so please email the Group Leader, Pauline Dennison dennison987@gmail.com to book your place.

Rural walks

We have ten members signed up and although we have at present a vacancy for the groupleadership, the group is going ahead and will meet once a month on the fourth Monday morning, meeting at 9 a.m. in the Coop car park for shared cars to the venue with a view to starting the walks at 9.30 and ending 12/12.30.



The walks will be circular of 4-6 miles and members will take turns to lead. Our first walk, on Monday 22 nd June, led by Maragaret Ollett will begin at Brigstock via Lyvedon. We have six places for any u3a members who wish to join us. Please sign up at the monthly meeting or email Glyn (interim group leader) groupsthrapstonu3a@gmail.com

Other new groups are in the planning stage including Sunday Lunches and Upholstery.

Sign up sheets will be available at the monthly meeting.



News from the Groups

Art Group

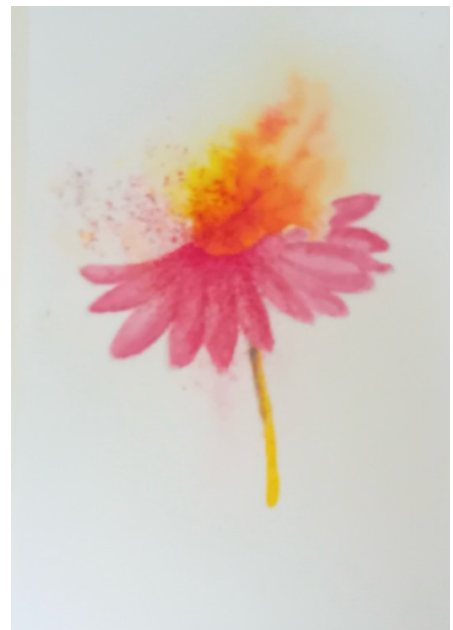
This month we are featuring the work of Mary Tucker, Sandra Kiff and Maria Clarke.

Mary has introduced us to a new medium, Brusho; this is a brand of water colour ink crystals which can create an unpredictable explosion of colour when sprayed with a fine water mist and is therefore more difficult to manage than one might think.

Sandra has been creative with coffee choosing to use this beverage in place of water colour paints and Maria has been experimenting with different styles ranging from traditional floral work to colourful abstract buildings.



Dancing Duck by Mary Tucker in Brusho after Joanne Boon Thomas



Echinacea by Mary Tucker in Brusho after Joanne Boon Thomas



Willow Pattern Plate by Sandra Kiff



Gone Fishing by Sandra Kiff after Paul Clark in coffee.

News from the Groups



Camelia by Maria Clarke in water colour after Edelene



Abstract Houses by Maria Clarke in water colour after Kate Rebecca Leach



Jelly Bean Row by Maria Clarke in water colour after Paul Clark



History Walks

We had a very enjoyable but very hot walk in Titchmarsh for May, we adjourned to the church for tea and cakes which were extremely welcome!

Our next walk is at **Wadenhoe on Thursday 25 th June at 2 pm**. It will be led by Stephen Hall.

Please sign up for the walk at the monthly meeting or email glynishill06@gmail.com

July's walk is on Wednesday 22nd July, from 2 to 4, at **Geddington**, led by Kam Caddell.

August's walk, on Wednesday 26th August, is in **Thrapston** with Eric Franklin

News from the Groups

Science and Technology Group

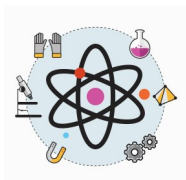
The S&T group meets on the 3rd Monday each month in Thrapston Baptist Church and we have had a fascinating schedule so far this year. But now it's time we got out and about for our summer season of visits and we would like to invite the wider U3A to join us.



We plan to visit: **Leicester's Space Centre** (15 June)
the Shuttleworth Museum (20 July) and **Swiss Garden Steam Railway** (17 August)

If you would like to join us on any of these trips, please get in touch with the group Coordinator, Phil Cox by email at gphilipcox@gmail.com

Our autumn talks programme is as below:



21 September: talk: Finding the Americas

19 October: talk: Aluminium (pt2)

16 November: Members meeting: bring a 'scientific object' that you have,

14 December: Any Port in a Storm!

If you fancy coming along and checking us out, you are most welcome! If you have a story you could tell us, then we would love to hear from you so we can include you in our 2027 schedule - don't be shy, we all have fascinating stories to tell that reflect our past careers, our hobbies or even our dreams and aspirations. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me or Sheila by email or come and chat at the main monthly meeting.

What Groups can I join?



Having had a glimpse of what's on offer in our u3a you might be looking for something new to do.

Here's a list of the groups on offer, their group leaders and which have vacancies*

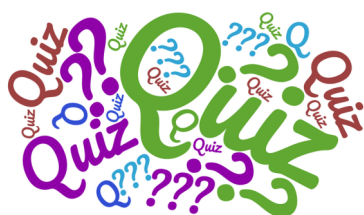
Contact Glyn, the Groups Co-ordinator for more details groupsthrapstonu3a@gmail.com

Art	Annie Thantrey	1 st & 3 rd Wed am
Art appreciation *	New group	TBA
Book club	Theresa Wood	4 th Friday 10 am
Bridge	Gordon Campbell	2 nd Thur, 1.45 – 3.45
Butterfly & Bird watching *	Bob Simpson	1 st Wed 10-12.00
Cake & Bake	Viv Tunstall	2 nd Fri, 2-4pm

News from the Groups

Canasta *	Jean Mole	1 st & 3 rd Thurs am
Creative Writing *	David Green	2 nd Wed, 2 – 4
Current Issues *	Glyn Hill & Pater Baden	2 nd Mon 2.30-4
Cycling *	Frank Boydell	Mondays 10am
Desert Island Discs	Glynis Hill	3 rd Wed, 2 – 4
Fishing *	Paul Taylor	TBA
Flower Bunch *	Linda Vickerman	Last Fri, am
French Encore *	Jan Pacey	1 st & 3 rd Thur, 10.15-12.15
French Revivers *	Roger Davies	2 nd & 4 th Wed, 2-4
Gardening	Angela Gyves	2 nd Wednesday 10.30
Gardening (novice) *	Jay Parker & Pauline Wright	2 nd & 3 rd Mon 2-4
Golf *	Mary Clark	1 st & 3 rd Friday p.m. times vary
History Walks (summer) *	Glyn Hill Eric Franklin	Last Wed or Thursday 2-4 June to Sept
Line Dancing *	Sue Pringle	1 st & 3 rd Wed 1 p.m.
Local History *	Eric Franklin	3 rd Tues, 2pm
Lunches *	Jean Mole	3 rd Wed
Makin' Music	Marion Healey	Wed 10.15 – 12.15
Motorcycling (Silver wheelers) *	Dave Tolmie/ Tony Lomer-Cross	2 nd Friday at 10.00
Nordic Short Walks *	Pauline Johnson	Tuesdays 2pm
Outdoor Bowls *	Pauline Dennison	1 st and 3 rd Mon 2-4
Outings/visits *	Jean Mole	Variable
Photography	Neil Underwood	1 st Mon 10.30 – 12.00
Rural walks *	TBA	4 th Mon 9 – 12.30
Science & Technology *	S Underwood/Phil Cox	3 rd Mon, 2-4
Singing for Fun *	Marion Healey	2 nd & 4 th Fri 1.30 – 3.00
Stitchers *	Wendy Davies	Last Wed 10.30 – 12
Sunday Lunches *	New group	4 th Sunday
Table Tennis 1	Gordon Campbell	Tuesdays 9.45 – 11.00
Table Tennis 2	Gordon Campbell	Thursdays, 9.45 – 11.00
Tai Chi *	Linda Vickerman	Thursdays, 2.00 – 3.30
Tai Chi Beginners/Sabre	Colin Northern	Tuesdays, 2.30 – 4.00
Trips (special events) *	Jean Mole	variable
Ten Pin Bowling *	Margaret Beston	2 nd Fri, 11.00
Ukulele *	Marion Healey	2 nd & 4 th Tues, 10.30
Upholstery *	New group	TBA
Wellbeing with Nature	Susan Collini	Wednesdays, am
Yoga *	Helen Dawson	Thursdays, 14.00-15.00

Other Events



THRAPSTON'S MAYOR'S QUIZ NIGHT

Food for Thought – The Mayor's Quiz

It's May and already another chance to rack our brains at The Plaza in the Thrapston Town Mayor's Quiz & Chips evening held twice each year. Every new Mayor in Thrapston uses his term of office to raise money for a charity of his choice. These now traditional quizzes help to significantly swell the fund totals whilst providing a mind and memory taxing evening.

On this occasion our u3a put in three teams of six participants, "u3a Rollers", "u3a Chancers" and "u3a All Stars". The quiz is arranged in eight rounds covering such subjects as 'Food & Drink', 'Geography', 'History', 'Art & Literature', etc with questions spoken by the Quiz Master Cllr Craig Wheeler and projected onto the Plaza screen. The quiz papers are exchanged with neighbouring tables to check the answers after each round.

If a team is particularly confident, that they will do well with a topic they can elect to use their 'Joker' to double their score for that round. Definitely no mobile phones or electronic devices are permitted!! Question sheets were placed on each table with 'Dingbats' & 'Movie Scenes' all adding to the team's score to be answered in the course of the evening.

In total 17 teams were entered for the Quiz with each team limited to between four and six members. It appears that the teams with members across younger age groups to more mature participants have improved chances of success, possibly due to the varying interests to be found in the spectrum between young and old.

There was a bar with a range of soft and alcoholic drinks at reasonable prices and at the halfway point the Fish & Chips, Sausage & Chips or the vegetarian option of Cheese Croquette & Chips from our pre order courtesy of 'Ben's Chippy' were eagerly consumed. I am not sure if this counts as brain food but nevertheless it was very welcome.

At past events we have been consistent with our u3a teams' success in that we have often come away with the 'Booby Prize', a large polythene bag filled with toilet rolls but not for this one. With our three teams reaching eighth, tenth & fifteenth which must be said is a remarkable improvement. However, it is not about the winning but the charity and taking part in a sociable event in the heart of our town.

The winning team recorded 109 points and second and third teams tied on 103 each so a 'tie breaker' was used and our u3a top team was only 19 points behind the first place which is highly commendable.

If previous years are anything to go by, we can expect a similar Quiz evening in August and if you would like to take part then don't be shy in coming forward as Thrapston u3a Masterminds are on the way up.

Mayor Craig Wheeler's chosen charity for this term is 'Little Bleeders'.

Report by Paul Ollett

Trips

RIVERBOAT TRIP -Friday 14th August



Although this trip is now fully booked, I will be taking names to go on the reserve list should anybody want to go but who has not yet signed up. Please note that I'll be taking full payment of £10 per person at the June monthly meeting for all those who have previously booked. Please make cheques out to myself, Jean Mole. Just to confirm, we will be boarding at Hartford Marina @ 10 o'clock (please be early) and returning at 1pm . Apologies to all of you who were looking forward to your fish and chips on this trip, but unfortunately on checking the reviews from Rumbles fish and chip shop, they were so consistently bad that I decided it was not worth going ahead with this option.

QUEEN ELIZABETH II- HER LIFE IN STYLE - Tuesday 4th August



The cost of this trip is now £50.00 & I will be taking full payment at the June monthly meeting. The pick up points are Thrapston Co-Op at 8:05 or Orbit Tyres, Rushden at 8:45, and I need to know where you will be boarding, together with your mobile phone number. We have entry tickets to the Exhibition at the Kings Gallery for 12 noon, so there will be time for a cup of tea or coffee (and use of the facilities) at a local cafe before entering the Exhibition. After leaving the Kings Gallery you will have some free time, so remember to bring your bus passes if you want to get out and about. However you need to be back at the pick up point by 4 pm and we hope to arrive back home around 2 to 2.5 hours later. My contact number is 07736 445658 should you need it either on the day, or beforehand. Jean

TURKEY & TINSEL - 23 to 28th November

This is definitely now going ahead, albeit with a slightly smaller group than previously. The full price for the 5 days/4 nights is £385 and I do need a deposit of £55 as soon as possible to confirm your place. The balance to be paid by 30th October. Cheques in this instance should be made out to "Higham & Rushden u3a". Please see me at the monthly meeting so I can ensure I have your current contact details.

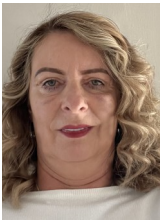
Jean Mole

Meet the Committee for 2026–2027



Frank Boydell **Chair**
chairthrapstonu3a@gmail.com

Ann Thorpe **Treasurer.**
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Donald Syme **I T Ops**
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Meet the Committee for 2026–2027



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Tina Jones **Website Manager**
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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

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 : Wendy Davies - 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