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Musings from the Chairman

"What is one to say about June, the time of perfect young summer, the fulfilment of the promise of the earlier months, and with as yet no sign to remind one that its fresh young beauty will never fade." - Gertrude Jekyll



What a month indeed. There were times when I felt like a lamb-chop on the barbe-que. Hopefully we adapted to the searing heat and now as the mercury lowers to more reasonable levels, we can emerge from the fridge or wherever you hid to keep cool.

Sports Evening. We warriors of u3a are made of much sterner stuff however, and it takes more than a little June sunshine to keep us down. Who came to the Sports Evening? What an excellent social event put on for us by our stalwart social group with the sporting activities organised and run by Freedom Leisure. We were a bit slow getting going with the rounders, but all hell let loose when the hockey got under way. If you haven't seen the excellent photos by Bob Simpson on our Facebook page, I recommend you take a look. One shows our Groups Coordinator, Glyn, trying to decapitate an opposition player. All good fun and not at all competitive. Did I mention the food? The best burgers in town. And a mystery of the missing vegan-burgers? Found the following day hiding in my fridge. Avoiding the June heatwave like the rest of us.

Charter Fair. This year's was the quietest Charter Fair I can remember and it seemed to work in our favour. Normally, the roads are so packed that it's hard to press-gang people into the Gazebo, put a pen into their hand and get them to sign a membership application form. This year we had free reign and 300 mystery books to tempt the unwary. To those too young for u3a, we asked them to pass the enclosed leaflet to their parents or grandparents. There is really no escape.

It was heartening this year to find almost everyone we accosted had heard about u3a. This really was a first and testament to the amazing job done over the last year or two by our publicity officers, Glyn Hill and Helen Dawson. Several people said they read about us on Facebook. Do take a look, Helen's posts are things of beauty and information. I've even been approached in the gym to be told what a great Facebook page we have at Thrapston u3a. Huge thanks to everyone who got involved in running our stall.

Website. Great news, our new website should be going live in July. Produced in-house by Sheila Guilford, it is a massive step up from our existing site, being clear, informative and easy to navigate. You will be kept informed when it happens, do take a look. The URL will change, but hopefully if you use the old one, you will be re-directed. If this is all gobbledegook, don't worry we will explain.

Enjoy your newsletter
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 : **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 - August 21st 2026.

Thrapston and District U3A Social Group invite you to

Thrapston Sailing Club,



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

The final twenty tickets will be on sale at the July Plaza meeting. The cost is £10.00 and the ticket includes a raffle.

Please let Polly know when purchasing your ticket if you have a special dietary requirement.

If you require any further information please see Polly at the July meeting at the Plaza.

Polly (on behalf of the Social Group) psjohnson2710@gmail.com

Monthly Meetings

The River Trent – by Michael Burton



The River Trent is one of England's great rivers, flowing for almost 185 miles from its source on Biddulph Moor in Staffordshire to its meeting with the River Ouse, where together they form the Humber Estuary. It has shaped the history, industry and landscape of the Midlands for centuries.

The Romans recognised the Trent's importance, using it as a transport route, and throughout the Middle Ages it remained a vital highway for trade. As navigation improved during the eighteenth century, towns along its banks prospered. Burton upon Trent became famous for brewing because the river provided both an excellent water supply and an efficient route for exporting beer across Britain and beyond.

The Trent has also been known for its unpredictable nature. Flooding has always been part of life for riverside communities, and many towns have invested heavily in flood defences to protect homes and businesses. Despite these challenges, the river continues to be a valuable natural resource.

Today, the River Trent is appreciated as much for recreation as for commerce. Walkers enjoy the riverside paths, anglers fish its waters, and rowers, canoeists and sailors make full use of this remarkable waterway. Rich habitats support kingfishers, herons, otters and countless other species, making the river an important corridor for wildlife.

Like many rivers, however, the Trent faces modern pressures from pollution, development and climate change. Conservation groups, local communities and environmental organisations are working to improve water quality and protect its wildlife for future generations.

The River Trent is far more than a geographical feature. It is a living thread that connects the history, economy, wildlife and people of the Midlands, reminding us of the enduring importance of England's rivers.

Report by Dave Tomlie



U3a News

The Third Age Trust - Writing Competition



There is still time to enter the essay competition ; 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 or

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>

Take a trip to the South Coast

Members are invited to join the first *u3a getaways* trip - *The Agatha Christie Story* - from 14-18 September 2026. You'll join other u3a members from across the country to explore the beautiful houses and coastlines that inspired her famous mysteries.



u3a getaways is a new programme of bespoke holidays exclusively for u3a members and friends. Find out more on the [u3a getaways website](#).

New Members



First, apologies to Della Read (not Delia) for the typo in the last newsletter!

A very warm welcome to this month's new members:

Sue Martin, Allan Godfrey, Jo Godfrey, Paul Burnet, Mandy Weston and

Karen Wykes

News from the Groups

New Groups New Groups New Groups New Groups New Groups

Current Issues

The group now has 10 members and will meet once a month on the second Monday afternoon from 2.30-4, starting on 10th August when the topic will be 'Prisons'.



The group leaders are Peter Baden and Glyn Hill

Please contact glynishill06@gmail.com for more information.

Novice Gardeners

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



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

Outdoor Bowling

The outdoor bowling group has met twice at Islip Bowling Club, on the first and third Mondays; from 2 until 4, until mid-September. The charge is £4 per person and bowls and technical support are provided. There is room for more members, so please email the Group Leader, Pauline Dennison dennison987@gmail.com to book your place.



Upholstery Group

Six people have signed up for this group and I will organize a planning meeting in September to decide on what, when and where. If any member of our u3a has knowledge or experience of upholstering I'd be very grateful for your input – I'm a bit out of my depth with this subject!

Please email or ring me Glyn, groupsthrapstonu3a@gmail.com 0774 296 9096.



Art Appreciation

This group has launched and a group leader is in the pipeline.



Sign up sheets for new groups will be available at the Plaza meeting

News from the Groups

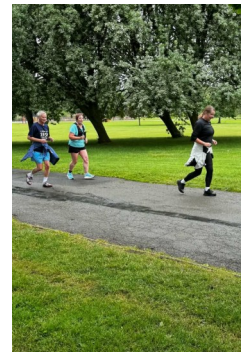
Couch to 5K: The Finish Line Story.



Today, under a soft Wicksteed drizzle, the Thrapston U3A C25K group crossed a finish line that was never just about distance. It was about courage, persistence, and the quiet belief that ordinary people can do extraordinary things when they show up for themselves — and for each other.

The morning began wet and grey, the kind of weather that tests resolve. But the group gathered anyway, ready for their final challenge: Park Run at Wicksteed Park. Swans and their fluffy cygnets drifted across the boating lake as if offering a gentle send-off. Marshals stood at corners, clapping, cheering, calling out encouragement that lifted tired legs and warmed damp spirits.

The course asked more of us than expected. To complete it, we pushed on for an additional ten minutes, digging into reserves built over nine weeks of effort, laughter, wobbling confidence, and growing strength. And we did it — every step earned, every breath a reminder of how far we've come. Today wasn't just about those who crossed the line. It was also for those who began the journey but had to step back for personal reasons. Their courage to start remains part of the story. And for those who stayed through the highs and lows, who ran in sunshine and rain, who doubted and kept going anyway — the pride is immense.



As we stood at the finish, soaked but smiling, something settled in the air — a sense of shared triumph. From no running experience to completing a Park Run, this group has shown what community, determination, and belief can build. We didn't just finish a programme.

We became runners and we have started a running group. We meet weekly, on Thursday at 8am and on Saturday for a Park Run. If you would like to join us you need to be able to run 5k. Please contact Theresa Wood -

theresawood634@gmail.com



News from the Groups

History Walks



Our July walk is on Wednesday 22 July at Geddington 2.00- 4.00. It will be led by Kam Caddell, a hugely enthusiastic guide who will take us to the Church, the Queen Eleanor Cross and around the village. The cost will be £4 to include coffee/tea and biscuits at the end of the walk.

Please email or ring me to book a place glynishill06@gmail.com 0774 296 9096. Please also let me now if you need a lift from Thrapston Coop at 1.30 or are willing to offer a lift.

If you'd like to have lunch beforehand, we recommend the Star – good reasonably priced food

Sunday Lunches

The lunches will take place on the 4th Sunday of each month. Our first lunch is on Sunday 27 th September at 12.00 at the Dukes Arms in Woodford. The cost will be £15 for one course, £21 for two and £25 for three. Payment will be payable individually direct to the pub on the day. The pub requires a £5 deposit and I can collect that from you at the July or September meeting or please ring or email me so that I can arrange payment.

Ideas for further venues include the Sondes Arms at Rockingham, the Fox at Thorpe Waterville, the Wheatsheaf at Titchmarsh, the Lilacs at Isham, the Woodpecker at Raunds, the Mill at Woodford and the Mandarin at Northampton.



Please let Glyn know if you'd like to book a place. groupsthrapstonu3a@gmail.com or phone 0774 296 9096.

Su Mallett has volunteered to be a co-group leader for this group (thank you Su!), if you're willing to join her in leading the group you will be greatly appreciated!

Golf

This group has teed off for the first time and was very enjoyable. The venue will be Pytchley Golf Club in Kettering on the first and third Fridays of the month in the afternoon. Prices for 9 holes are £9 for over 65s and £12 for under 65s. If you'd like to join the group, please email the group leader



Mary.clark.147@btinternet.com

Rural walks



The next planned Rural Walk will be Monday 27th July, led by Jay.

It's a circular walk around Barnwell/Armston of approx 4/5 miles. It involves 1 stile and some gates with a small ascent of 220 ft. We will meet at 9 a.m. at the Co-op carpark in Thrapston. For any member interested in joining us, there will be a sign-up sheet at the next Plaza meeting.

Michael Watts—group leader

Trips

RIVERBOAT TRIP -Friday 14th August



Due to cancellations, I now have a couple of places available for this trip. 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. 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 was recently reduced to £50 due to more members signing up than initially anticipated, but unfortunately it is now full and entry tickets have been purchased. However, I am happy to take names to put on the reserve list, just in case anyone drops out (and someone usually does!!). Give me a call or see me at the next monthly meeting. The pick-up points are Thrapston Co-Op at 8:05 or Orbit Tyres, Rushden at 8:35. I need to know where you will be boarding, together with your mobile phone number so please make sure I have this information. 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 445 658 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

u3a Events

The Sports Evening



The sun shone brightly over Islip Pavilion as Thrapston U3A members gathered for an evening of sport, friendship, and good food. It was one of those golden summer nights where everything feels lighter—conversations, footsteps, and the gentle sense of community that defines our group. The evening began with a lively game of walking rounders, a wonderfully inclusive twist on the traditional favourite. With measured pacing, tactical thinking, and plenty of cheerful encouragement from the sidelines, every player found their rhythm. The slower pace didn't dampen the excitement; instead, it created moments of shared triumph and good-natured mischief as fielders plotted clever catches and batters celebrated unexpected home runs. Walking rounders has become a hallmark of our U3A ethos—active, sociable, and welcoming to all.

Next came a spirited session of walking hockey, played on the pavilion's open green space. Sticks tapped, teams coordinated, and laughter carried across the field as members discovered hidden skills and surprising competitive streaks. The game offered just the right blend of movement and strategy, ensuring everyone could join in without pressure.

The scent of a barbecue drifted across the pavilion grounds. Burgers, sausages, and colourful salads were shared around picnic tables, with conversations flowing as easily as the evening breeze.

It was a perfect chance to relax, reconnect, and enjoy the simple pleasure of eating outdoors on a warm summer night. Events like this remind us why Thrapston U3A thrives: activity, companionship, and the joy of being part of something bigger. The sports evening at Islip Pavilion wasn't just about games—it was about community, sunshine, and celebrating life together.

Theresa Wood



In the Community



Charter Fair

Did you visit our stall?



Thrapston & District U3A was delighted to take part in this year's Thrapston Charter Fair on Saturday, where we enjoyed a successful and rewarding day meeting local residents and promoting everything that U3A has to offer.

A particular highlight was our "Mystery Book" giveaway. Around 300 books were carefully wrapped in brown paper, each with a few intriguing clues about the story hidden inside. Every book also contained a U3A leaflet, helping to introduce recipients to our organisation and encouraging them to find out more. The mystery books proved extremely popular and attracted many visitors to our stand, giving us the opportunity to chat with people about our activities, interest groups and events.

Although we felt that overall footfall at the fair was lower than in previous years, there was plenty of interest in our stand throughout the day. Encouragingly, many visitors were already familiar with u3a and several people came specifically to speak to us about becoming members.

The day reinforced our feeling that the u3a message is reaching more people across Thrapston and the surrounding area. Awareness of who we are and what we do continues to grow, and it was wonderful to see such positive engagement from the local community.

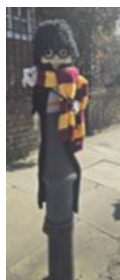


Thank you to everyone who helped make the day such a success.

Helen Dawson

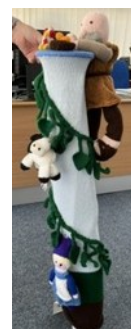


In the Community



Books have a way of stitching a community together — one story, one smile, one shared memory at a time. Whether it's a classic tale like *Moby Dick*, the countryside charm of *The Darling Buds of May*, or the gentle mischief of children's favourites like *Jack & the Beanstalk* and *Harry Potter*, stories shape how we see the world and each other. This year's yarn bombing displays celebrate that magic.

Thrapston woke to a burst of joy as the Yarn Bombers unveiled their first wave of creations for Charter Fair week. Bright, cheerful bollard toppers appeared overnight, each one stitched with care and full of character. They brought smiles, conversations, and a sense of shared delight across the town.



Outside the Post Office, the post box became a knitted seascape — waves, boats, sea creatures, tiny storybooks, and even a playful nod to *Moby Dick*, creating a miniature ocean of imagination. Children stopped to spot the mermaid, the whale, and the cheeky octopus hiding behind a wave.

Outside the Library, the display bloomed into a soft stitched countryside scene inspired by *The Darling Buds of May* — blossoms, baskets of fruit, tiny figures, and springtime charm bringing a warm, nostalgic glow to the garden.



Created by Thrapston U3A, WI & Coffee Club

Theresa Wood

Meet the Committee for 2026–2027



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The Last Word

Here are some of the answers to questions you didn't know you wanted to ask!



When did our u3a start?

At the beginning of May 2012, a meeting was held in the Plaza to establish interest in setting up the Thrapston & District U3A.

How many groups were there at the start?

There were originally 7 groups planned ; these were Gardening, Books, Bridge, Theatre trips and outings, Luncheons, Walking/Rambling and Play Reading.

The Inaugural members meeting took place on 22 June when 85 members were enrolled. By then there were ten groups with Patchwork, Cardmaking and Family History being added.

How much did membership cost then?

Membership initially cost £16—making our current fees quite a bargain!!



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