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### ***Musings from the Chairman***

Another month, another scorcher and being school holidays, many of us will have been on grandchildren duties. Being of a certain age, we can all recognise the huge change in our weather compared to when we were their age, but there are upsides. Holidays in the UK are now warm, sunny and predictable. No check-ins at the airport, being searched and generally made to feel like a potential terrorist. No hanging around for hours waiting for your delayed flight then 2 weeks hiding inside in the air conditioning, to avoid the 40-degree heat and wildfires. Back home, there's no grass to cut or hedges to trim and the flowers have adapted to drinking water laced with Fairy Liquid. What's not to like?



The big u3a news this month has been the switch to a new website. This time, we've produced it in-house and have full control to amend it instantly and keep it up to date. The new site is smart, uncluttered, current, easy to use and a quantum leap up from our old one. Also, you can contact any member of the Committee, or Group Leaders directly from the website. You don't need to know their emails, just type your message and the website will forward it to the relevant person.

When we decided to build our own, we needed someone with the relevant skills. Cometh the hour, cometh the woman. Sheila Guilford stepped into the void to design and then build the new site, and what a fantastic job she has done. Sheila was assisted by Donald Syme, who is currently maintaining the website while our new Webmaster – Tina Jones – is training up. We all owe them our thanks.

This exercise emphasises the skills, knowledge and experience that live on in our membership. Don't let them die, offer them to our community for the benefit of everyone and the joy and satisfaction of a job well done. If you haven't looked at it yet, click on this link: [thrapston.u3asite.uk](http://thrapston.u3asite.uk). Let us have your feedback and suggestions for how we can improve it.

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

### August Meeting - August 21st 2026.

#### Thrapston Sailing Club,

The buffet lunch at the Sailing Club for the Summer event, replaces the meeting at the Plaza on Friday 21st August. Please note that 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. This event is available for members only, by ticket.

Polly (on behalf of the Social Group) [psjohnson2710@gmail.com](mailto:psjohnson2710@gmail.com)



### Next month's speaker, on September 17th, is :

#### Mel Harvey

Not just anyone gets admitted to  
the Inner Magic Circle...

Mel is a master of close-up  
magic, a form of entertainment  
where the magician performs  
right under the noses of the  
audience. Hear his story and  
prepare to be amazed!



## Advance Notice

### Remembrance Day



Thrapston u3a would like to lay a wreath at this year's Remembrance Parade on Sunday 8th November 2026. We would like to have a "marching party" in the actual parade.

We are also going to lay a wreath on Armistice Day which is on Wednesday 11th November 2026.

If you would like to participate, then please contact Frank, our Chairman, at the monthly meeting or email

[chairmanthrapstonu3a@gmail.com](mailto:chairmanthrapstonu3a@gmail.com)

# Monthly Meetings

## *Robert Brewer: Life as a TV and Film Extra*



Robert Brewer has enjoyed an interesting and varied career as a television and film extra, experiencing the excitement of working behind the scenes on productions watched by millions. Although extras rarely speak on screen, they play a vital role in creating believable settings, whether portraying shoppers, office workers, football supporters or historical characters.

Brewer has appeared in numerous productions over the years, gaining first-hand insight into the world of filmmaking. His work has taken him onto studio sets and location shoots, where patience and professionalism are essential. A typical day often begins with an early call time, followed by hours in costume and make-up before cameras begin rolling. While much of the work involves waiting, the moments spent on set provide a fascinating glimpse into how television programmes and films are created. One of the pleasures of being an extra is the opportunity to observe well-known actors and directors at work. Brewer has witnessed the dedication required to produce even the shortest scenes, with multiple takes filmed from different angles to achieve the perfect result.

These experiences have given him a deep appreciation for the skill and teamwork involved in the entertainment industry. Beyond the cameras, life as an extra also offers the chance to meet people from all walks of life. Friendships are often formed while waiting between scenes, and every production brings new faces and fresh experiences. No two filming days are ever quite the same.

For Robert Brewer, working as an extra has been more than simply appearing in the background. It has been an opportunity to become part of stories that entertain audiences across the country while enjoying a unique perspective on the creative process. His experiences demonstrate that even those who remain out of the spotlight make an important contribution to the magic of television and film.

*David Tolmie*

*No Time To Die; Wonder Woman 1984; The Flash; Batman*

*Holby City; After Life; The Press; Grantchester; Eastenders*

## U3a News



### U3a Friends Newsletter

Have you seen the u3a Friends Newsletter which has much information about the National *u3a*?

**friends news** 

It has details of **News**; this month's results of a demographic survey as well as news from members

**friends events** 

**Events**; a report on the recent *u3a Festival 26*

**friends media** 

**Media** items; details of articles in the national press

**friends offers** 

**Offers**; this month has details of *u3a Getaways*

**friends features** 

**Features**; this month looks at a member's commitment to Creativity.

**friends learning** 

**Learning**; competitions, learning opportunities on line, and a list of subject advisors

**friends impact** 

**Impact**; report of *u3a Maths expert's* talks at the House of Lords

Don't miss out on lots of interesting information about what's happening nationally !

Sign up to the u3a Friends newsletter at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/u3a-friends>

## New Members

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



Dawn Boyce

Kim Chell

Bogdan Offenber

Ann Capps

Jane Joy

Peter Joy

Mark Johnson

# News from the Groups

## Rural Walks

The next walk, on Monday 24th August, will be around Warkton and Weekly.

The walk is approximately 3 miles (and not as previously stated) and is available to all members. A sign up sheet will be available at the next U3A meeting.

If you need any more information, contact Mick Watts email [mickwatts602@gmail.com](mailto:mickwatts602@gmail.com)



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## Sunday Lunches

The first lunch is booked for Sunday 27 September 12.00 noon, at the Dukes Arms in Woodford. We now have 21 signed up so far and we have space for more.



The meals cost £15 for one course, £21 for two courses and £25 for three. The Dukes Arms requires a £5 deposit.

Please email me to book a place or sign up at the September monthly meeting.

[Groupsthrapstonu3a@gmail.com](mailto:Groupsthrapstonu3a@gmail.com)

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## History walks

We had a really enjoyable walk in Geddington last month.

This month we shall be in Thrapston, when our hugely knowledgeable Group Leader, Eric Franklin will be telling us remarkable facts and exploring hidden treasures.

We'll meet at 2 pm on Wednesday 27 August at Ben's Chippy in Oundle Road. The walks are open to all u3a members and guests are also welcome. Let me know if you plan to be there so we have an idea of numbers, but if you decide at last minute to join us you will be welcomed.



[Groupsthrapstonu3a@gmail.com](mailto:Groupsthrapstonu3a@gmail.com)

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## Upholstery group



I've arranged an initial planning meeting on Monday 17 August at 4pm at my home. We shall be planning content and the day of meeting.

If you haven't already signed up and wish to do so it's not too late, just email me.

[Groupsthrapstonu3a@gmail.com](mailto:Groupsthrapstonu3a@gmail.com)

# News from the Groups

## Butterfly & Birdwatching

## Stanwick Lakes

The weather on arrival at Stanwick Lakes was perfect for butterflies. With the sun shining, a slight breeze and the temperature around 20 degrees, it was looking good.

Stanwick Lakes was originally a quarry but before quarrying could start, archaeological excavations were carried out that uncovered thousands of years of heritage. Neolithic and Bronze age barrows were found as well as the remains of a Roman villa and Saxon buildings and some of the artifacts found are now on display in the small museum above the cafe in the visitor centre. After quarrying finished in 2004 it was bought by East Northants council then landscaped and finally became the Stanwick Lakes Nature Reserve and heritage centre /Adventure Park.

After meeting up we headed past the Bronze Age barrow towards an area in which Common Blues and Brown Argus butterflies can usually be seen. On arrival it was all quiet as the hot weather had killed off the Birds Foot Trefoil plants which the Common Blue prefers to get its nectar and also to lay its eggs on. A lovely solitary Red Admiral appeared sipping nectar from the many Teasels in the area.



*Red Admiral*



*Small Tortoiseshell*

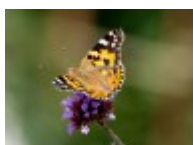


*Gatekeeper*

We moved on down the path where the old railway line used to be and Small Whites and Gatekeeper butterflies were present along the path. We reached the historical gardens section and a Painted Lady butterfly and Small Tortoiseshell were present around the gardens. We carried on to the barbecue area where lots of butterflies were to be seen. By now it was getting hot as we carried on and some Red Admirals were busy amongst the bushes by the path as we approached Kingfisher Bridge, with some lovely Dragonflies and Damselflies also appearing by the river.



*Common Darter*



*Painted Lady*



*Ringlet and Bee*

On the other side of the bridge, butterflies were everywhere on the Bramble bushes and a large Burdock bush had lots of Commas, Red Admirals as well as a Brimstone and Peacock butterfly feeding on its flowers which was quite a sight. We carried on down the path by the river and came to a patch of wild flowers. Common Blues and a Brown Argus butterfly were spotted there.



*Comma*



*Comma*



*Brown Argus*

We saw twelve different species and over seventy butterflies. It was now twelve thirty and time to head home. We had a lovely walk and many thanks to Colin and Paul for the photos.

**Bob Simpson**

## News from the Groups



### Gardening Group

#### Trip to Springfield House Gardens

What a wonderful day we had at Springfield House Gardens !

Perfect weather, perfect gardens, perfect tea and cake and perfect company !

The U3A Gardening Group usually spend the summer months visiting gardens big and small looking for inspiration for our own gardens

They are always lovely days out and inevitably include lunch or tea and cakes !

In the winter months we meet to plan, make useful gardening aids and exchange ideas.

Why not join us !

*Angela Gyves - Group Leader*



### Yoga Group

The Yoga Group currently has room for a few more members.

This friendly and supportive group meet at the Baptist Church on Thursdays from 1p.m. to 2 p.m.

No previous experience is necessary and it is suitable for all abilities

Yoga is known to improve flexibility, strength and well-being.

*Helen Dawson—Group Leader*

**YOGA**

STRETCH, BREATHE, FEEL GOOD

*Move your body,  
calm your mind* ♥

**ALL MEMBERS WELCOME**  
A friendly and supportive group for everyone

**NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE NECESSARY**  
Suitable for all abilities – just come as you are!

**IMPROVE FLEXIBILITY, STRENGTH & WELLBEING**  
Gentle movements and breathing to help you feel your best

**THURSDAY 1-2PM**  
♥  
THRAPSTON BAPTIST CHURCH

# News from the Groups



## Science & Technology Trip to the Shuttleworth Collection

Didn't we have a fabulous day out!

The Shuttleworth Collection is not a museum - every item in the collection actually works, it flies or it drives and a dedicated band of volunteers keep everything ticking over.

The collection focuses on items from the inception of flight through to the end of the Second World War, including the obligatory Spitfire and Hurricane. Alongside these are a wonderfully complete demonstration of the development of flight from the earliest days.

It also features cars and motorcycles that ran alongside the aircraft. They all work, including the 'Charabus' to Kettering!



During our visit a flying club from Cambridge was testing some of the collection. The black Lysander was taken up and demonstrated for all - showing how it took our wartime agents across to Europe to work with the Resistance.

Being part of a group gave us great discounts, a free cuppa on arrival and a one-month pass to come back and see more that we missed the first time - particularly for us, the beautiful Swiss Garden that we couldn't take in given the time we had.

If you want to join us on our forthcoming schedule of events then please get in touch with Phil (07411 149678, [gphilipcox@gmail.com](mailto:gphilipcox@gmail.com)) or Sheila ([mailto:nandsu@hotmail.com](mailto:mailto:nandsu@hotmail.com))

### Planned meetings for 2026

21 September: talk: Finding the Americas (Phil)

19 October: talk: Aluminium pt2 (Phil G)

16 November: Members meeting: bring a scientific object that you have and explain it!

14 December: move meeting from Dec 21st: Any Port in a Storm! (Phil G)



# News from the Groups

## Thrapston U3A Book Club

*Reflecting on **The Nightingale** and Welcoming Local Author **Thomas Richard Brown***

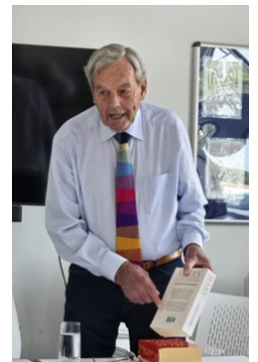


The Thrapston U3A Book Club gathered this month for a powerful and deeply engaging discussion of *The Nightingale* by **Kristin Hannah**. Members described the novel as harrowing, thought-provoking, educational, inspiring, and ultimately inspirational — a story that opened the door to conversations about courage, sacrifice, and the quiet resilience shown by ordinary people during extraordinary times. A novel that moved the room. Hannah's portrayal of two sisters living under Nazi occupation prompted reflections on moral bravery, the hidden work of resistance, and the overlooked experiences of women during the Second World War.

Many members spoke about how the book lingered with them, stirring memories, challenging assumptions, and offering new insight into the human cost of conflict. The discussion was rich, heartfelt, and full of thoughtful exchanges.

Following the book discussion, some members of the creative writing group joined us in welcoming the local author **Thomas Richard Brown** as a guest speaker.

Richard, known for his works *Mary Knighton*, *Thisbe*, *A Knock at the Door*, and *Feeding the Pigs*, shared an engaging and generous insight into his writing life. He spoke about the craft of storytelling, the discipline of shaping character and place, and the delicate balance between imagination and truth — themes that resonated strongly after reading *The Nightingale*. Members enjoyed hearing about the inspirations behind his books, the challenges of writing with emotional honesty, and the importance of capturing the small details that make a story feel alive. His visit added a lively and personal dimension to the morning, with many staying afterwards to ask questions and continue the conversation.



A memorable morning of Literature. This meeting was a reminder of what makes the book club special: shared learning, meaningful discussion, and the chance to connect through stories that move us. The combination of a powerful novel and an inspiring local author made the morning truly memorable. The group now looks forward to its next gathering — and to another book that will spark curiosity and conversation.



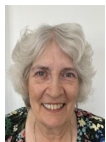
## Meet the Committee for 2026–2027



Frank Boydell

*Chair*

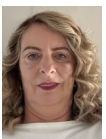
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# The Last Word

## How our u3a started.....



### How many members were there at the start?

The Inaugural members meeting took place on 22 June when 85 members were enrolled.

On July 20th, 2012, the first general meeting was held with Eric Franklin, a local historian, speaking on the "20th Century History of Thrapston".

In these first meetings, group leaders were encouraged to briefly speak about their groups.

Membership grew rapidly, by an average of ten per month and by August there were 100 members



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](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*