u3a Thrapston & District
Learn, Laugh, Live

Newsletter
October 2026



Friendship ✦ Learning ✦ Fun in our Community

Musings from the Chairman



Welcome to this month's Newsletter and a special welcome to those of you receiving it for the first time. Joining an established organisation or group can feel a little intimidating, but after that initial step, you'll wonder how you lived without it.
Our membership continues to grow, and with it, the number of activity groups for your enjoyment. All our activities, like the rest of our u3a, are run by members who volunteer their time. In recognition of them all we held a thank you social last month to show our appreciation. I hope everyone enjoyed the morning and appreciates how much they are valued. Inevitably, we always need more people to step forward to replace those taking a break, especially in May when we hold our AGM and vote in the new committee. Most people remain in post, but there is always some turnover. Next May we have some members taking a well-earned break and we are looking for some of you (yes, you) to fill the vacant posts. Just like the first time you walked into the Plaza, it can feel intimidating, but remember the second time, when you wondered what all the fuss was about. Currently, we are looking for a Publicity Officer and a Groups Coordinator. If you feel you might be interested, speak to the current incumbents – Helen Dawson and Glyn Hill - to find out more about the job. You can also contact them via our new website. You are also welcome to sit in at our monthly committee meeting, meet the crew and see how we work. You'll be amazed just how much fun we have. Enjoy your new format newsletter created by our Editor, Wendy Davies.
Frank

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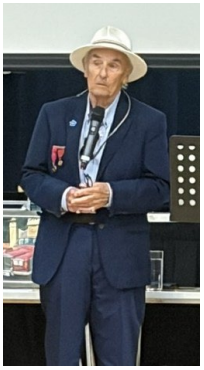
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Your ideas, stories & photos make our newsletter – we'd love to hear from you

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

September's Speaker - Mel Harvey - Magician



Mel Harvey has had a remarkable career as a magician and entertainer. He began in 1969 as a Redcoat at Butlins, then worked at holiday camps before moving into TV and theatre. He appeared on The Sooty Show with Harry Corbett and later Matthew Corbett and also toured in theatre shows with Sooty and the magic rabbit Presto.



His TV credits include Rainbow, Opportunity Knocks, 3-2-1, The Weakest Link, and most recently Britain's Got Talent. A member of the Inner Magic Circle with Gold Star, Mel specializes in comedy magic and close-up tricks, performing at venues like the Grosvenor House, The Savoy, and the Royal Lancaster.

He has also developed shows for children, a Wacky Wizard show with singing and participation, plus balloon modelling, plate spinning, and even Punch and Judy.
He keeps things light, funny, and audience-focused, which may explain his long and varied career.
Everyone reported that they really enjoyed his presentation, even the Chairman who had to wear a whisk on his head!



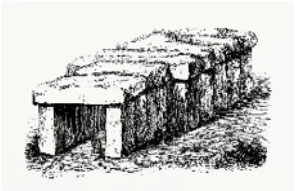
This month's speaker, on October 16th, is :

Trevor Stainwright

Wind and Water Mills of Northamptonshire



Next month's speaker, on November 20th, is



Colin Bloor

Colin will illustrate his talk on **Ancient Monuments** with photographs

MONTHLY MEETINGS

The Christmas Event 2026

18th December at the Plaza



Tickets for the above event will be on sale at the October meeting.
The cost is £10.00 and payment can be made by card or cash.

Lincoln Noel is returning to entertain us with seasonal music.

This will be followed by a light lunch, plus mince pies or Christmas cake, tea or coffee and a drink with your lunch.
There will be our usual super raffle and quizzes.
Doors open at 10.30 and we will finish about 13.45.

Sent from Polly on behalf of the Social Group
Email: psjohnson2710@gmail.com

Christmas 2025……







u3a NEWS

u3a friends

As well as regular updates and stories from across the movement, members of “u3a friends” newsletter community get exclusive access to the u3a Friends Extra benefits program, featuring discounts and offers.

If you're not yet a u3a friend sign up now and join the community.

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

Remember to check out u3a Getaways - an exclusive holiday programme for u3a members. These bespoke trips have been designed to create opportunities for members to come together from across the UK to learn, discover and explore.



NEW GROUP

U3A Eco friendly products

The initial meeting of this new group will take place on Saturday 7 November at 11 am at the home of the Groups Co-Ordinator.

Tea and coffee and biscuits provided.

We’ll decide on when and where the group will happen and what the outline ‘programme’ will be. Sharon is group leader and anticipates that it will be a short course.

We look forward to seeing you.

Email the Groups Co-Ordinator for more details;
https://thrapston.u3asite.uk/groups

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

A Message From The Groups Co-ordinator

A reminder that you don't need to be signed up as a member of the group to join in Rural Walks, Lunches, Sunday Lunches, History Walks, Outings and Visits. Please email the group leader to book a place via the website https://thrapston.u3asite.uk/groups

RURAL WALKS

Rural walks are changing from Mondays to Friday mornings with a new Group Leader, Jay.
All members are welcome.
Email me https://thrapston.u3asite.uk/groups and I'll pass any messages on.

The proposed dates for walks are :



Friday 30th October

Friday 27th November

Friday 11th December

Friday 8th January

Going forward from February, we should be able to stay on the 1st Friday of each month.

SUNDAY LUNCHES



The September Sunday lunch went very well. There were 25 of us.

The next outing is to The Sondes Arms in Rockingham on 25th October at 12 noon.

There are still plenty of spaces available.

For a group booking the cost is £24 for two courses, £30 for three courses. Having looked at all the prices though I could not see that this was any cheaper than just ordering from their general menu. The carvery is priced at £17. Starters are £7/£8 and other mains are priced at about between £14 and £18.

The form for signing will be at the next U3A meeting or you can email msu_allett@yahoo.co.uk to book your place. A couple of people put their name down for this visit but did not leave any contact details on the form so please do check that I have these.
Thank you.



Val and I look forward to seeing you at The Sondes Arms.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Members of the Photographic Group recently visited other groups to take photos of members engaged in various activities.

There were prizes, donated by local businesses, in 3 categories:
Best "Arty" Shot Best Action Shot Best Group Shot

Well done to all the participants. Here are the winners.

Best 'Arty' Shot



Linda Gill "Complimentary Colours"

Linda wins a voucher from Fresh Clean Bins

Best Action shot



Neil Underwood "On the Hunt"

Neil wins a voucher from The Handpicked Wine Box

Best Group Shot



Mike Byrne "Ready for the Off"

Mike wins a voucher from Berry's Cafe

Many thanks to

Fresh Clean Bins

The Handpicked Wine Box

Berry's Bistro

for their support

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

ART GROUP



October marks our third year of coming together as an art group - hard to believe as the time has gone so quickly. As a special treat to celebrate this anniversary we were joined by local artist, Melanie Henson, to tackle a still life ; subject matter - a ceramic bowl filled with lemons. I can guarantee that no two pieces of work will look the same and therein lies the magic. There have been a few changes over the years, people have moved on and new faces have appeared. The group has spilled out into the main body of the library to accommodate this growth in size. The members have grown in ability too and lesson plans have been replaced by a kind of freestyle where everyone chooses their own subjects in their preferred medium and that is always rich and varied. I float around in case anyone needs help, but in the main I am able to sit and paint along with everyone else. In fact, everyone has acquired skills they can share, so you could say I am becoming surplus to requirements!

There is never any criticism, all the members give praise and encouragement and it has become a calm and happy space, a place where one's creative juices can freely flow. Art is a mindful process where one becomes totally absorbed in colour and creativity and the worry world simply melts away. I have observed this on many occasions; you can often hear a pin drop during the session. However, it isn't always so; there can be much raucous laughter and sharing of personal stories, friendships develop and support is always available. That is the beauty of the group and it is as joyful and colourful as the paintings produced.



Annie Thantry *Group Leader*

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

LUNCH CLUB

The next meeting will be at **the Star & Garter in Chelveston** for 1 o'clock on Wednesday 21st October.
They have a special Senior's lunch time menu for just £12.95 for 2 courses or £15.95 for 3 courses. If you would like to join us, please email me on peterandjeanmole@btinternet.com or text on 07736 445 658 and let me have your menu choices.

I have also booked **The White Horse in Tilbrook** for our meal on Wednesday 18th November and will forward the menu later.

Jean x

***MENU FOR STAR & GARTER, CHELVESTON*.** **£12.95 for 2 courses or £15.95 for 3 courses.**

Starters
Panko-crusted King Prawns, served with sweet chilli dipping sauce and lime dressed salad garnish
Tomato Bruschetta, Toasted bread topped with ripe tomatoes, fresh basil & a drive of olive oil. A proper Italian classic, done right.
Whitebait. Crispy fried whitebait served piping hot with squeeze of fresh lemon & tartare sauce for dipping

Mains
Classic Fish & Chips Sustainable sourced cod fillet in crisp golden ale batter. Served with chips, minted mushy peas with house made tartare sauce.
Wholetail Scampi Premium whole tail scampi, served with hand cut chips, garden peas & tartare sauce
Chicken & Chorizo Pasta Tender chicken breast paired with spicy Spanish chorizo, tossed through creamy pasta & finished with fresh herbs and a hint of garlic
Chicken Caesar Salad Crisp cos lettuce tossed in a rich creamy Caesar dressing with grilled chicken breast, anchovy fillets, shaved parmesan and homemade croutons.
Chicken Schnitzel Pan-fried chicken breast in golden panko crust, served with buttered new potatoes a rich cranberry sauce and a fresh side salad
Ham, Egg & Chips Tender sliced ham served with a fried egg and golden chips.

Desserts
Crumble of the Day Stewed fruit topped with a buttery golden crumble, served warm with custard or vanilla ice cream
Brownie Served warm with a scoop of vanilla ice cream. Rich, fudge and utterly indulgent
Cheesecake with a buttery biscuit base and a glossy berry compote.
Mackie's of Scotland Iced Cream ~ Vanilla, Chocolate or Strawberry. Ask your server for other flavours

ACCESS MATTERS UPDATE

Hello, I'm the Access Advisor for our u3a and it's been a while since I provided information and so I thought I'd provide an updated overview:



PARKING

I know that parking continues to be an issue for all of us and it has been exacerbated by the continued closure of the Bridge Hotel and the car park. There's free parking in the Bull Ring and at the Co-Op in Sackville Street which are both quite a distance but we still have an agreement with Bletsoe that we can use the cattle market car park at the Midland Road end of Market Street during meeting times. This is for all members.
There is just one designated parking place for blue badge owners to the right of Plaza entrance and this is on a first come, first parks, basis.

THE PLAZA



Induction loop: the loop in the Plaza is I believe, working. If you have a hearing aid, please use the facility by switching by switching to T or using your smart phone.



Access to the building: There is a 1:20 ramp to the right-hand side of the building with entrance through the fire door by the stage. Please also use this in case of a fire alarm if you have mobility problems.



Seating: At each monthly meeting, there are reserved seats at the front for those members with mobility, hearing and sight problems. Please feel free to use these, together with anyone accompanying you.



Toilet: The accessible loo is situated in the foyer. It has rails, an accessible basin and limited room for a side transfer from the left.



GROUPS

Access to buildings used by our groups varies; the Library meeting room, Islip Village Hall, St James Hall and Castle Court being fairly accessible and the Baptist Church and the Whitco facility have a stairlift for first floor activities. Overall, we have a range of local buildings to choose from so if you do find you are unable to join a group because of access, please speak to the Group Leader in the first instance.

If you have any issues with accessing our u3a, either for the monthly or group meetings please let me know and I'll endeavour to help.

Glyn email: *accessthrapstonu3a@gmail.com*



Remembrance Parade Sunday 8th November 2025

The Mayor of Thrapston, Cllr Craig Wilcox, would like to make you aware of our Remembrance parade on Sunday 8th November.

It would be wonderful to see you there as we come together to honour and remember those who have served. Your presence would mean a great deal to the community.

We will be laying a wreath on behalf of Thrapston & District u3a.

Please note as per last year the Service will be conducted in the Church and NOT at the Memorial Stone.

Parade Arrangements

1: For those who wish to march please gather outside Fire station opposite the kebab shop at 10am.

2: Form up at 1010hrs.

3: Brief by Parade Marshal, Matthew Ellmer.

4: Step off at 1020hrs.

5: Arrive at 1030 in Church Yard met by Padre Nolan.

6: Parade into Church.

7: Church service to include wreath laying and Act of

Remembrance.

8: Church Service finished 1125, form up on Road four those wishing to march back, step off at 1140.

9: Parade dismissed 1155hrs.



IN THE COMMUNITY

From Northamptonshire Police, working in partnership with Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service, North Northamptonshire Council, West Northamptonshire Council, and the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, as the Northamptonshire Safer Roads Alliance (NSRA)

Free Mature Driver Event – DIRFT, Crick

Wednesday 14 October 2026

Are you a mature driver aged 60+?
Do you live in Northamptonshire and rely on driving to stay independent? This **free event** is designed especially for you.

Driving plays an important role in everyday life, and as part of the Northamptonshire Safer Roads Alliance, we are keen to help mature drivers stay safer on the roads for longer. While driving ability can change over time for many reasons, particularly as we get older, recognising and adapting to these changes can help keep both drivers and other road users safe.

This Mature Drivers event is aimed at drivers aged 60+ and will cover a wide range of topics related to safe driving, including:

* Practical advice and safety information
* Opportunities to reflect on how driving needs may change over time
* FREE hints-and-tips driving sessions, available to book and delivered by Northampton Advanced Motorists at a convenient date.

Our aim is simple: to help mature drivers drive safely, confidently, and for longer.

Event details **The Hub at DIRFT, Dirft Drive, Crick, NN6 7GZ**
what3words: ///holiday.twinkling.lofts Two sessions available: 10 am and 1 pm

Places are limited and attendance is strictly by booking only.
Book your free tickets via Eventbrite:

https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/northants-mature-driver-roadshows-4099083

NEW MEMBERS



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

Colin Hysom	Julie Lymm	Bob Lymm	Rosemary Balcer
Jackie Joyce	Roderick Cooper	Joe Coombes	Anne Sauntson

MEET THE COMMITTEE

Frank Boydell	Chairman	chairthrapstonu3a@gmail.com
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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

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