

Countesthorpe U3A Newsletter



Dec 2013 – Jan 2014

Issue 2013/6

Chairperson's Letter

(Tel: 277 4187)

Dear Friends

The weather now tends to be cold and dull. Not the most enthralling time of year and possibly making us feel down at heart. But remember – in 11 days' time the nights will start to get shorter and with the increased daylight we will be able to look forward to spring and, dare we hope, summer.

It is no wonder that in the northern hemisphere many cultures celebrated mid-winter as a way of cheering ourselves up in the cold, dark times (worse in times gone by – no electric light or central heating). How many of us recall waking to frost on the *insides* of the windows and paraffin lamps to see by. We can go to the toilet in warmth at night. I remember having to use a chamber pot to save going into the freezing downstairs toilet at my grandmother's house (that was in the 1960s!).

Christmas may have been taken over by the church from earlier pagan festivities but we still enjoy the warm fellowship of the time with family and friends. Getting together for extra meals (how many of our U3A groups have enjoyed special Christmas meals instead of whatever we normally meet for?), special singing - carols and Christmas songs.

It is a time to plan and prepare for the coming year – the newspapers are full of summer holiday advertisements and our own Travel Group is into long term planning – Wengen, Minehead, etc.

On behalf of the committee I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

From

Barry Hillyard
Chairperson

Countesthorpe



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

DIARY DATES: Dec 2013 and Jan 2014

Date	Group	Activity	Venue/time
16 Dec	Creative Writing	Theme: "The Door was Locked"	2 – 4 pm at Brook Court
17 Dec	SWANS	Town Hall Sq & New Walk	9.45-ish bus from C'thorpe
18 Dec	Literature	The Last Runaway by Tracy Chevalier	2 – 4 pm at Brook Court
20 Dec	CHEWS	Main meeting + weigh-in	Lesley's home, between 9.15 and 10.15 am
23 Dec	Folk Dancing		2.00 – 3.30 pm Village Hall
27 Dec	Discussion	Hot News	10.00 am at Sheila's home
7 Jan	SWANS	Foston Church towards Peatling (coffee at Glebe Gds)	10.30 am at Foston Church
8 Jan	Travel	National Space Centre <i>(using shared cars)</i>	9 am from Village Hall
8 Jan	Flower Arranging		2 – 4 pm Small Lounge
9 Jan	History	Medieval Leicestershire by Peter Liddle £3 on the door	Methodist Chapel 10 am – 12.15 pm
11 Jan	Model Flying	Saturday flying resumes	9.30 am – noon Sports Hall, C'thorpe College
13 Jan	Folk Dancing		2.00 – 3.30 pm Village Hall
14 Jan	Monthly Meeting	Royal Mistresses <i>Spker: Roger Powell</i>	Doors open 1.30 pm Speaker from 2.00/2.15 pm
15 Jan	Literature	The Silent Wife by ASA Harrison	2 – 4 pm at Brook Court
15 Jan	Singing for Fun	Resumes on 1 st & 3 rd Weds	7 – 8.30 pm Methodist Rm
17 Jan	CHEWS	Main meeting + weigh-in	Shirley's home, between 9.15 and 10.15 am
19 Jan	Solo Lunch	Cosby Golf Club	Noon for 12.30 pm
21 Jan	SWANS	Market Bosworth Town Trail	10.30 am at car park as you drive into Mkt Bos'th
21 Jan	Creative Writing	Theme TBA	2 – 4 pm at Brook Court
24 Jan	Discussion	Topic: "Charitable Giving"	10.00 am at Liz M's home
27 Jan	Folk Dancing		2.00 – 3.30 pm Village Hall
30 Jan	Walking CARE	See website or Nov What's On	9.15/9.30 from Village Hall

FOLK DANCING

Our next dancing dates are 23 December, then 13 and 27 January 2014.



We dance in Countesthorpe Village Hall between 2 pm and 3.30 pm on the second and fourth Monday of each month. We are currently having a few tries at Morris dancing – or Patsy's version of Morris as danced by ladies' sides. As with all our dancing, it is highly suitable for men dancers – and everyone would be very welcome, especially those with comfortable shoes and a sense of humour.

Details from Patsy Paterson on 277 6259

INDOOR MODEL FLYING

You wouldn't expect to see one of these flying round Countesthorpe, would you? The Mosquito was recently featured in a TV programme, and played an important part in the war. Yet you *can* see one, at the Indoor Flying group.

There's room for you too, so why not come along and have a look at what we enjoy doing? We're closed in December due to exams at the College, but re-open on Saturday, 11th January from 9.30 am to 12 noon.



Come to Countesthorpe College Sports Hall, through the little door down the path immediately to the left on entering the College gates. Any questions? Just phone John Armstrong on 0116 247 7212.

FIT FOR LIFE is NOW OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS!

Come along and join us in the Village Hall each Monday between 11.30 am and 12.30 pm. Aerobic movement to music, along with exercises to strengthen the muscles and improve flexibility – all tailored to our needs by our great instructor, Karen Bent. £2.50 on the day. Wear loose clothing and appropriate shoes.

Details from Marlene Robinson on 277 9162

HISTORY GROUP

Thursday, 9 January 2014: Medieval Leicestershire

A period of villages, open fields, castles and abbeys but also of famine, pestilence and war. This last talk in Peter Liddle's series of six will introduce the rich archaeology of medieval Leics. 10.00 am – 12.15 pm, at Methodist Chapel. £3 on the door, including refreshments.

Thursday, 20 February: Guided tour of the Jewellery Museum, Birmingham – with time afterwards for lunch and to visit the fabulous New Birmingham Library. Leave Village Hall at 9.15 am, and depart Birmingham approx 3.45 pm. £13. *(Arranged by Jenny Mills for the group)*



Thursday, 13 March: The Royal Armouries, Leeds. Leave Village Hall at 9.00 am and depart Leeds at 4.00 pm. Explore the 5 galleries of Britain's national museum of arms and armour! Restaurant, coffee shop and indoor picnic area. £15. *(Arranged by Barry Hillyard for the group)*

Mon 29 Sept – Thurs 2 Oct: 3-night break in Portsmouth for the Historic Dockyard (Victory, Warrior, new Mary Rose Museum), plus the National Museum of the Royal Navy, Harbour Tour, Spinnaker Tower, Gunwharf Quays, Old Portsmouth and the cathedral, etc



Coach transport to and from Portsmouth – whilst there all time is free to use as you please. £220 per person (standard room) or £250 in an upgraded room. Cost includes accommodation on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis at the Royal Maritime Club (100 yards from Dockyard), Dockyard ticket, driver and hotel gratuities, plus a group visit on the return day to the D-Day Museum and the Overlord Embroidery. *(Arranged by June Hawkins for the group)*



For details see the History Table, the website or contact June on jhawkins45@talktalk.net or telephone 0116 277 6330.

DOROTHY ELGAR



We are sad to report the death of Dorothy Elgar, one of our Founder Members, who died on 27 November after a lengthy battle with cancer.

Dorothy will be remembered with great affection by her many friends in the U3A which she worked so hard to establish. She ran the Scrabble Group for many years, and was an active member of SWANS and Creative Writing.

We thank you, Dorothy, for the legacy of our thriving U3A, and all the fun and friendship we enjoyed with you.

(Dorothy is pictured above on a U3A visit to Vienna, and her memories of the early U3A days can be found in the website's Archive section.)

COUNTESTHORPE – VILLAGE OR TOWN?

House builders can see Countesthorpe as an easy target for future development, due to the lack of opposition to recent planning applications, and plan to build hundreds of new homes in the village.

Countesthorpe is a settlement of some 2,693 dwellings and as of 31st March 2013, 495 dwellings had been either completed or granted permission as part of the Blaby District Council 2006 Core Strategy. The addition of 495 dwellings to Countesthorpe represents almost a 20% increase in the housing stock of the village.

For more information about current proposed and potential future developments you may wish to visit the website of the newly-formed Countesthorpe Community Action Group at [www. countesthorpecag.org](http://www.countesthorpecag.org)

If you have changed your address, or phone number, please let Sue Wyllie (our Treasurer) know so that we have your current details in case we need to contact you!

LEARNING TO DRAW

Starting on 8 January 2014, an initial six-week course has been arranged. It will be held on Wednesday mornings 10 am – noon in the Residents' Lounge at Brook Court . The cost is £45 with the full amount due at (or before) the first meeting. Payment to June - cheques preferred, payable to 'Countesthorpe U3A', please



Our tutor will be Heather Wharam, an experienced artist and qualified teacher, who will bring an enthusiastic and lively approach to teaching basic drawing techniques.

Names from the 'interested' list have been contacted to confirm places and an information sheet with details of materials required has been given to those on the first course. It is hoped to run further courses later in 2014.

Details from June Hawkins on 277 6330 or jhawkins45@talktalk.net

A KIWI CHRISTMAS

(Sent in by Liz Lockwood-Jones who is currently visiting relatives in NZ; this is from the South Wellington U3A, New Zealand)

There is panic in the household
I've so many cards to write
You may think it's far too early
With no mistletoe in sight.

But I'm sending them to England,
To Australia and the States
And the thing which really bugs me
Is the rise in postal rates

In the UK I imagine
There'll be heavy snow and sleet
While the Brits are green with envy
Of us basking in the heat.

But no doubt we're all mistaken
Life is never what it seems,
And the perfect Christmas climate
Is a fragment of our dreams.

(It seems that the weather is a universally popular topic of conversation!)

REPORT ON THE TRAVEL PLANNING MEETING

The Travel Planning Meeting held on Thursday, 24 October was well attended and, following discussion, the following outings were planned for 2014.

8 January	National Space Centre, Leicester (<i>shared cars</i>)
4 February	Warner Bros' Studios, Watford
6 March	Cheapside Hoard, Museum of London
April	Calke Abbey (<i>date to be decided</i>)
May	Saltaire, Bradford (<i>date to be decided</i>)
12 – 17 June	Coach holiday (<i>see update later in Newsletter</i>)
3 July	Lord Leycester Hospital, Warwick
23 – 30 August	Wengen, Switzerland
August/September	Promenade Concert, Albert Hall, London
September	King's Lynn (<i>date to be decided</i>)
October	Hardwick Hall (<i>date to be decided</i>)

The first 3 days have already been planned and are open for booking. In the case of the Leicester Space Centre, the intention is to travel using shared cars – there is ample parking at the Centre. There are still places available on this trip – see notice board in small lounge, website or What's On. There is also space on the outing to Warner Bros' Studios. This has not proved to be as popular as the Cheapside Hoard but is interactive and should be fascinating for those of us interested in the production of special effects and the technology used. Unfortunately, the Cheapside Hoard is already full, but if you would like to go please ask either me or Janet Easey (who has planned the trip) for a place on the waiting list.

It is hoped to book a Promenade Concert at the Albert Hall. The programme is not available until April, but it is intended to book a popular classical concert with seats (*not standing!*) and to leave Countesthorpe after lunch to arrive in good time for an evening concert and to depart the Albert Hall for Countesthorpe at the end of the concert with an estimated return to Countesthorpe around midnight.

A request was made for help in organising some of the outings and many thanks to those of you who volunteered help – Janet Easey (Cheapside Hoard), Jenny Barradell (Lord Leycester Hospital), Allan and Rosemary Jordan (Saltaire) and Barry Hillyard (Kings Lynn).

Please check either Countesthorpe U3A's website (www.countesthorpeu3a.co.uk), the monthly What's On bulletin, the Travel Table in the small lounge or slideshow at main meetings for progress on all outings.

Jenny Mills
277 2041

GROUP NEWS – FESTIVE CHANGES

Over the Christmas period, please note that some of our groups take a break before resuming their normal routine meetings in 2014. This the information that has been provided by Group Leaders as at Newsletter copy date:

- ❖ **Kurling** – last meeting 11 December, resume 8 January
- ❖ **Art** – last meeting 12 December, resume 16 January
- ❖ **Handbells** – last meeting 18 December, resume 15 January
- ❖ **Model Flying** – no meetings in December, resume 11 January
- ❖ **Singing for Fun** – no meetings in December, resume 15 January
- ❖ **Walking (CARE)** – No walk in December, resume on 30 January
- ❖ **Fit for Life** – no meetings on 23 or 30 December, resume 6 January
- ❖ **Play Reading** – no meeting in December, resume 28 January
- ❖ **Classical Music** – no meeting in December, resume 23 January
- ❖ **Solo Sunday Lunch** – no lunch in December, resume 19 January
- ❖ **Scrabble** – no meeting on 1 January, resume 5 February

Discussion, Creative Writing, Flower Arranging, Country Dancing, CHEWS and Literature will continue without breaks.

QUESTION – WHAT DO BIRDWATCHING, PILATES, FENCING AND CURRY-MAKING HAVE IN COMMON?

The answer is that these could all be new activities available to our members in 2014. Currently we are in the early stages of gauging interest.

We have started lists to see if anyone would like a cookery course, lasting approximately 4 hours, with **bread-making** and **curry-making** as the two themes. If interested, sign up in the small lounge. More details later on!

We have acquired some funding from Blaby District Council for ‘taster’ sessions in a variety of activities including **kettle bells, Pilates, Nordic walking, fencing** and **T’ai Chi**. If you are interested in any (or all) of these, just put your name on the lists in the small lounge. More details in 2014!

A **birdwatching** group is in its early stages with a meeting to give this a chance to become established on Thursday, 23 January from 3-4 pm in the village hall lounge. Joan Burn is going to talk about the ten most frequently seen garden birds. For now, this meeting is open only to those who put their names down on the original ‘interested’ list.

More information from Menna Carr on 01455 283862

U3A SUMMER SCHOOLS 2014

We may be approaching winter, but our thoughts can readily turn to Summer Schools to cheer us up and give us something to look forward to when the weather improves. £285 full board, or £107 day rate (inc lunch)

Deposit: £75 pp. Full details and a booking form can be found on the U3A national website (events and competitions section of the members' area), or ask David Wild for a copy. Here is a summary of what's on offer:

Harper Adams University, Newport, nr Telford

Monday, 14 July – Thursday, 17 July 2014

- Ancient Civilisations of the Americas
- Canal History (*The rise, decline and rise again of the canals*)
- Cinema History (*Celebrating 100 years of Hollywood*)
- Creative Writing (*Best seller or Man Booker shortlist?*)
- Current Affairs (*Political and Social Studies*)
- Drama Through the Ages
- France (*Regard sur la France d'aujourd'hui*)
- Latin (*A toe in the Tiber – a quick dip into the Latin language*)
- Philosophy (*An introduction to Philosophical Metaphysics*)
- Recorder Ensemble

Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester

Monday, 18 August – Thursday, 21 August 2014

- Arts and Architecture of the Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain
- Digital Photography (*Artistic re-interpretation*)
- Drama – Power and Cruelty
- Gardening
- Literature (*Women's voices of World War I*)
- Music (*Making friends with the great composers*)
- Poetry (*The transforming language of poetry*)
- Science (*Light and sound in nature*)
- Singing for Pleasure

U3A EXPLORES SCIENCE AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION

Monday, 24 March 2014 1.30 pm – 4.55 pm (Admission by ticket @ £20)

Bubbles: the bath and beyond (*Helen Czerski*)

The conversational racetrack (*Elizabeth Stokoe*)

Biological clocks, light and what happens in a cave? (*David Whitmore*)

Apply in writing, with SAE, to Third Age Trust, 19 East St, Bromley, Kent BR1 1QE

UPDATE ON THE COACH HOLIDAY

The suitability of the hotel is of major importance and it was not possible to get a reservation in Sidmouth as originally planned for 2014 at a time to suit our group. It was decided to make a provisional date for the following year; this has been done and the dates are 16-23 May 2015.

This left a gap in our calendar and, as I have spent many happy holidays in the Exmoor area, after researching the internet I decided to provisionally book a country house hotel half a mile outside Minehead town centre and to plan outings taking in the local beauty spots for those who can no longer walk too far. As this area can be described as a walkers' paradise it seemed appropriate to offer the holiday to those interested in undertaking some walking with the coach being used to drop off at appropriate points, as well as providing an excellent hotel base for those wishing to take the week at a slower pace.

This week a friend and I travelled down to Somerset to check on the Northfield Hotel's suitability. It is set in 2 acres of landscaped gardens in an elevated position overlooking the coast and surrounding scenery. Trip Advisor states that the hotel was bought 2 years ago by the present owners and that they are in the process of refurbishing the whole of the hotel. We were not disappointed – the hotel was very well kept with new beds in the well-appointed rooms, most of which overlook the sea. On the ground floor there are excellent large lounges overlooking the gardens, coast and surrounding scenery. Outside in the well-kept gardens were tables and chairs where afternoon tea could be taken (included in the price). Overall, the atmosphere is more like a home than an hotel. It is an easy walk through the hotel gardens, across the road into Blenheim Gardens and the centre of town. Another possibility is to walk through the hotel gardens and 5 minutes down the road is the seafront and the old Minehead harbour area.

We were also shown the hotel leisure area which includes a swimming pool and small gym. Outside is a putting green. Both the evening meal and breakfast were excellent. We also sampled afternoon tea which, last Tuesday, included homemade cakes and scones!

One problem is that of the hotel's 31 rooms only 4 are singles, so I have made arrangements to book some twins or doubles for single use. Obviously, this raises the cost of the hotel price for those people wishing to do this! As you will realise, from the rooms available, I cannot include too many single room users because fewer passengers means the cost of the coach is divided between fewer people, and I need to keep the cost of the coach viable.

This coach holiday is designed to offer those who do not wish to undertake too much walking a chance to have a holiday and see the local beauty spots from the coach. However, Exmoor is in such a good walking area that it will also offer an opportunity to those of you who like to be dropped off and, if possible, picked up at the end of a walk without the need for a circular route being undertaken. As well as using a coach, there is good local public transport which could aid your return to Minehead and offer a range of other walking or exploration options.

Included in the price is coach travel from Countesthorpe to the hotel and return, accommodation on a dinner, bed, breakfast and afternoon tea basis and all gratuities. Not included are coach outings whilst on holiday, entry fees, holiday insurance or lunch. The hotel is a Best Western 3 star in a quiet position and a lovely setting. The itinerary is being drawn up to maximise the pleasures of this excellent hotel, ie we will be back every day in time for afternoon tea (4 pm) on the terrace or in the lounge. I am liaising with a local coach company and will publish the cost of these days out as soon as possible. For those wishing to spend longer days out I am quite sure that with the use of public transport and your bus pass you will be able to return to Minehead!

You might like to view the hotel on the internet – just search for ‘Northfield Hotel Minehead’ using your usual browser for their website giving pictures, information and reviews. If you would like an up-to-date information sheet or more details, then please email me at jennymills16@talktalk.net or telephone me on 0116 277 2041.

Jenny Mills

CHRISTMAS LUNCH

A hundred and four people enjoyed our now-traditional Xmas lunch at Tastes Restaurant, at Leicester College on Friday, 29 November. Barry drew the names for the prize draw with the first prize of a £20 Marks and Spencer voucher going to Marlene Robinson, second prize (£15) to Doreen Tilley and third prize (£10) to Judith Mace. *(Next year has been provisionally booked!)*

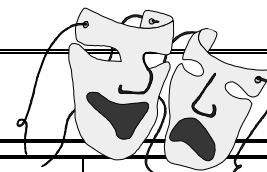
SINGING FOR FUN

Our group has now been running for 4 years at the Countesthorpe Methodist Church on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month from 7 pm to 8.30 pm. We have a small loyal group who enjoy the singing and the company, and a pianist who we could not manage without.

But we would like to see more members - both male and female. We presently have one gentleman and it would be great to see others. There is no necessity to be experienced. (If you sing in the bath - brilliant!) The repertoire is varied and suggestions for songs are always considered. Singing is good for our health, particularly our breathing and the more we practice the better our breathing becomes. There is a saying “If you don’t use it, you lose it”. Our first meeting in the New Year is on Wednesday, 15th January. Come on, give it a try. Interested?

Ring Pat on 223 4660

THEATRE PROGRAMME



Tues* 28 Jan	Sleuth	£16	Market Harboro'	Leys 6.40 pm, + VH, Square	12 Nov
Mon, 17 Feb	The Mikado	£16	Concordia, Hinckley	VH at 6.35 pm, Square 6.40 pm	10 Dec
Thurs, 20 Mar	Fallen Angels	£27	Milton Keynes	VH at 12.30 pm, Square 12.35 pm	14 Jan
Wed , 9 April	ICE (Robin Cousins)	£33	Milton Keynes	VH at 12.30 pm, Square 12.35 pm	11 Feb
Wed, 28 May	Pygmalion	£32	Milton Keynes	VH at 12.30 pm, Square 12.35 pm	11 Mar
Wed, 25 June	As You Like It (optional meal)	£28 (£22)	Tolethorpe	VH at 4.15 pm, Square 4.20 pm	8 Apr
Wed, 9 July	Singin' in the Rain	£35	Milton Keynes	VH at 12.30 pm, Square 12.35 pm	13 May

SLEUTH - a very funny parody of the classic country house thriller, the plot twists and turns creating an atmosphere of tension and suspense between the older, successful man and his younger rival.

THE MIKADO – enjoy this well-loved Gilbert and Sullivan operetta!

FALLEN ANGELS – Noël Coward's comedy classic

ICE – New skating extravaganza choreographed by Robin Cousins, and our first trip to an ice show. Not to be missed!

PYGMALION – George Bernard Shaw's popular play, famous as the storyline for 'My Fair Lady' – now see the stage version!

AS YOU LIKE IT – Shakespeare's classic comedy, played out in the open air theatre at Tolethorpe. Magic for a summer's evening.

SINGIN' IN THE RAIN – The story of Hollywood's first musical which gave the silver screen its voice and left silent movies behind.

June Hawkins – tel: 277 6330 or email: jhawkins45@talktalk.net

SELECT YOUR CHOICE OF PICK-UP POINT WHEN BOOKING
AND THEN PLEASE HELP BY STICKING TO IT!

**PLEASE NOTE THAT SMALL REFUNDS WILL BE GIVEN ON
THE COACH WHERE NUMBERS ALLOW FOR THIS!**