

# Countesthorpe U3A Newsletter

Feb - Mar 2016

Issue 2016/1

## CHAIRPERSON'S LETTER

(TEL: 247 8043)



Hello Everyone!

I trust that you enjoyed the Christmas and New Year festivities and are, like me, enduring the current British winter. If, also like me, you are eagerly anticipating the outbreak of spring, with lighter nights and warmer temperatures then you can't wait for the change to happen.

And change is upon us in the U3A. You will see in this edition of our plans to change the publishing schedule for the newsletter. In 2015 we lost a few groups and gained a few, reflecting the changes in tastes and interests of our members, who incidentally continued to grow during 2015.

This is all part of the changing nature of the world that we live in. It seems now that nothing is permanent. In all parts of our lives the pace of change seems, to me at any rate, to be accelerating as I grow older. Simply trying to remember which station is where on modern television is a chore!

Our hope is that in our U3A we change only what is needed and sensible and that it continues to reflect the needs of our members.

There are however, some things that must not change. We must continue to be a friendly and welcoming group that meets the needs of the community in which we live.

We may not always achieve it, but we always strive to meet that goal.

Happy "U3A-ing" in 2016!

Graham Surman  
Chairperson

Countesthorpe



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

## SOME KEY DIARY DATES: Feb-Mar 2016

Date	Group	Activity	Venue/time
14 Feb	Solo Lunch	12 noon for 12.30 pm at Ullesthorpe Court	
15 Feb	Creative Writing	Continue from " <i>The writing was barely legible . . .</i> "	2 - 4 pm Brook Court
16 Feb	SWANS	Knighton Park	10.30 am KP car park
17 Feb	Literature	The Way We Live Now	2 – 3.30 pm Brook Court
17 Feb	Singing for Fun		7 – 8.30 pm Methodist Ch
22 Feb	Country Dancing		2.00 – 3.30 pm Village Hall
22 Feb	Ten Pin Bowling	Hollywood Bowl, Meridian	From 1 pm
23 Feb	Pilates		1.30 – 2.30 pm VH
25 Feb	Garden Apprec'n	Hodsock Hall	Leave VH 10.00 am
26 Feb	Discussion	How Much Choice Do We Really Need?	10 – noon at Ruth's home (3 Hallcroft Gardens)
1 Mar	SWANS	Harborough Union Wharf	10.30 am Wharf CP
1 Mar	Pilates		1.30 – 2.30 pm VH
2 Mar	Scrabble	Also Upwords & Rummikub	2 – 4.30 pm, Brook Court
3 Mar	Birdwatching		7.30 – 8.30 pm VH lounge
7 Mar	Ten Pin Bowling	Hollywood Bowl, Meridian	From 1 pm
8 Mar	Monthly Meeting	Herbal Medicines in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century <i>by Serene Foster</i>	Doors open 1.30 pm Speaker at 2.00/2.15 pm
14 Mar	Science/Tech	Discussion over lunch	12.30 pm Axe & Square
14 Mar	Country Dancing		2.00 – 3.30 pm Village Hall
15 Mar	SWANS	Wistow & Newton Harcourt	10.30 am Wistow o/f CP
16 Mar	Literature	The Grapes of Wrath	2 – 3.30 pm Brook Court
17 Mar	Garden Apprec'n	Question Time	10.15 am VH lounge
28 Mar	Country Dancing		2.00 – 3.30 pm Village Hall

## CELEBRATION!

Back on 23 December, I was being taken out for afternoon tea by two friends. It was a mystery trip which ended at Brownsover Hall near Rugby (a long way for a cup of tea, I thought!)

We were ushered into an impressive hallway and seated in comfortable chairs (easy to rise from!) and soon after along came a young man who took us through to another room, booked in the name of "Holmes" (which I actually queried). My two friends ushered me in first and a great cry of "Surprise!" rose up, and there you all were – my family and my dearest friends (mostly U3A, of course!) from SWANS, Fit for Life, Solo Sunday lunch, etc all laughing because you had managed to keep the secret for quite a while – incredible! I never guessed for one moment! I was so excited, I think I actually squealed and jumped up and down (that's what Fit for Life does for you!).

So, I want to thank all of you who were there on that lovely occasion to celebrate my big birthday – for coming, for all the cards and generous gifts and for keeping the secret contrived and organised by Liz, my lovely daughter-in-law, aided and abetted by my daughter and sons – right under my nose while I was with them in Dubai! Many phone calls and emails went back and forth for a number of weeks. Liz reckons she knows all my friends better than I do. It was the best day ever, and thank you seems very inadequate, but I will remember that day for the rest of my life. Thank you all so much!

*Sheila Holmes*

## BLABY - WESTERN DRIVE COACH PICK-UPS

Unfortunately, due to threatening behaviour from some residents, it has been decided that future trips will **NOT pick up in Western Drive** - for our wellbeing and the safety of Robinson's Coach Travel drivers and vehicles.



Any future trips (eg History, Theatre, Travel and any others that may be arranged) will pick up in Blaby at the bus stops at both ends of **The Southway** instead, as/where appropriate according to the destination and passenger demand. On occasions additional pick-ups may be offered, such as the Social Centre, as is currently the case.

We are sorry for any inconvenience. This is regrettably a case of having to let bullying behaviour triumph over common decency.

# COUNTRY DANCING



Our U3A Country Dancing Group will be meeting in February on the 22nd and in March only on the 14th because of the Easter holiday. We welcome all members to Countesthorpe Village Hall between 2 and 3.30 pm for a wide range of folk dancing - hopefully not too energetic, but some steady exercise for you! Wear comfortable shoes and layers of clothing so that you don't get too hot!

*Details from Patsy Paterson on 277 6259*

## PLAY READING

Unfortunately, due to changes in the way in which the local authority now make plays available for use, it has proved impossible for this group to remain viable. This is a sad reflection on these times of cutbacks. Thanks to all who have taken part in such an enjoyable activity.



*Joan Burn*

## HISTORY GROUP

**Thurs, 18 Feb: RAF Museum, Hendon.** Leave Village Hall at 9.00 am, Hendon at 4.00 pm. £20 payable by 12 January. Some places remain!

**Wed, 6 April: Ashby Castle.** Depart VH 9.45 am in own/shared cars. Free, but small donation to your driver appreciated. Time afterwards for lunch and then to explore museum and Ashby town.

**Thur, 12 May: Flag Fen Bronze Age** archaeological site, followed by visit to Peterborough Cathedral. Light refreshments available at Flag Fen, or bring your own, or lunch in Peterborough. Leave VH 9.00 am. £20 by 12 April.

**Thur, 23 June: Saffron Walden** – full details to follow, but keep date free!

**Thur, 14 July: Sapcote** – guided walk. Leave VH 1.30 pm (own/shared cars) £2

**Mon, 26 – Thurs, 29 Sept 2016: Short break to Ironbridge Gorge area.** This will include a visit to the Museum of Carpet, a 16-mile ride on the Severn Valley Railway, Annual Passport covering all 10 Ironbridge Gorge museums/sites, plus a visit to Much Wenlock (*home of the Olympic Games – remember 'Wenlock' and 'Mandeville' logos for the Olympics in 2012?*), and then Shipton Hall. Half-board at the 3\* Best Western Valley Hotel + coach travel, etc. £300 pp (shared) or £345 (single room). A deposit of £20 per person asap secures your place.

*For details see the **History Table**, the website, or contact June at [jhawkins45@talktalk.net](mailto:jhawkins45@talktalk.net) or telephone 0116 277 6330*

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

This is the last Newsletter in its present bi-monthly 8-page, A5 booklet format. For some time now we have been considering how best to update communications with all our members, ensuring that you have all the essential information without any unnecessary duplication or cost (many copies of the Newsletter are discarded in the hall after monthly meetings). We remain committed to providing printed information to ensure that nobody is left out if they do not have internet access.

Most of the information that you need on a month-by-month basis appears in What's On anyway. Details of each of the Activity Groups appear on the coloured sheets issued two or three times a year. Leaflets on each Group are available from the racks in the Village Hall lobby at monthly meetings. More information is shown on the rolling slide show at our general meetings before the speaker. All of the above (and more) is available on our website: ([www.countesthorpeu3a.co.uk](http://www.countesthorpeu3a.co.uk))

Recently, it has been difficult to obtain contributions for the Newsletter, which has meant either blank pages (*that hasn't actually happened!*) or me writing some pieces which are largely waffle and page-fillers. This is not a sensible way to continue, and so we have looked at alternatives, and decided that we will in future produce a Newsletter just twice a year – in June and December. This should be more interesting and meaningful.

In June we can introduce the new committee and feature the Chairperson's Annual Report following the AGM, whilst in December we can ensure that you are kept informed of the changes which always occur to our routine group meetings over the extended Christmas and New Year period. Also, for each of these six-monthly Newsletters we would like Group Leaders to provide a short update on what has been happening in their groups over the previous half-year, together with any plans for the immediate future.

We hope you will like the new system and that the revisions to the Newsletter will prove to be more interesting and meaningful.

We've also taken the New Year as an opportunity to refresh the appearance of the website a little – it's now almost five years old! Many of the 'group identity' or 'brand' pictures have been updated, which we hope you will like.

*June Hawkins*

### **If you have changed your address, or phone number,**

It is **REALLY IMPORTANT** that you let Sue Wyllie (our Treasurer/Membership Secretary) know (on 284 9959) so that we have your current details on file in case we need to contact you.

### **THIS IS ESSENTIAL FOR TRIPS/HOLIDAYS!**

*If you have an email address, that would be helpful, too, please!*

## COULD YOU PUT A LITTLE SOMETHING BACK?

We are beginning to look ahead to the next U3A year, commencing in April. Firstly we have to organise the AGM and complete the year-ending accounts and produce a report on what has happened this year. Secondly, we will have a few vacancies to fill on the committee. Would YOU be willing to give a little time and effort to ensure that our U3A (now 420+ members) continues to prosper?



The committee meets for about an hour on the Friday morning before the monthly meeting. Established members have identifiable roles, such as Chairperson, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Speaker Finder, and Publicity and Information - with newer members 'shadowing' in their first year. Committee members generally serve for two years, so it is not onerous. Most people find that they really enjoy their 'stint' – just chat to any existing committee members to find out more.

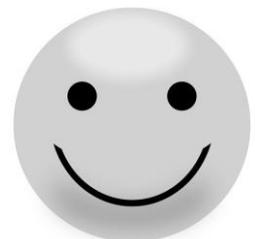
In 2017, Sue Wyllie will be relinquishing her role as Treasurer and so we will definitely need a suitable replacement. So, we are thinking well ahead and seeking somebody to work alongside Sue for a full year with a view to taking on her role from June 2017. Are you that person? You should be reasonably computer-literate and have some accounting experience. We really do need somebody for this absolutely vital role, so please don't be shy about coming forward! There will be a great deal of help and support available, not only from Sue, but all fellow committee members.

If YOU are willing to help out – please make yourself known to any committee member, or call Graham on 247 8043 for a chat. Thank you!

While visiting his family, an elderly man asked for the password to their Wi-Fi. "It's taped under the modem," he was told. After three failed attempts to log on, he asked, "Am I spelling this right? T-A-P-E-D-U-N-D-E-R-T-H-E-M-O-D-E-M?"

"What's a hipster?" asked my four-year-old grandson. "Someone who will wear something just to look different," I said. "They'll often buy clothes in charity shops and wear thick glasses."

"Are you a hipster, Grandma?" he asked.



## GARDEN APPRECIATION

The Garden Appreciation Group's regular meetings from March onwards will be changing to the **third** Thursday of every month, though dates for outings may vary from this. The outings detailed below remain unchanged.

- **Thurs, 25 Feb:** Visit to **Hodsock Hall** to see the snowdrops. £22.50
- **Thurs, 17 Mar: Question Time:** Bring your questions and share solutions. VH Lounge 10.15 am
- **Thurs: 28 Apr: Coton Manor Gardens** to see the bluebells. £17.50 by 9 Feb. Leave VH 12.45 pm

Details from Ruth on 277 1533 or see her at the general meeting.

## BIRD WATCHING

Our regular group meetings will continue on the first Thursday of the month from 7.30 pm in the small lounge at the Village Hall. Provisional outdoor visits, departing at 9.30 am from the Village Hall were agreed at our December Planning Meeting as follows:



Fri, 7 April: Coombe Abbey  
Mon, 6 June: Rutland Water  
Oct: Date and venue TBA.

Fri, 13 May: Brandon Marsh  
Sept (date TBA): Brandon Marsh

For more details nearer each date, please see What's On, or our U3A website, or call Tony Claricoates on 277 5251.

### FREE LEGAL ADVICE FOR U3A MEMBERS

Advice available 24 hours a day, on any legal issues (not just U3A-related ones). Call FirstAssist on 01455 251500 and quote: "The Third Age Trust. Number 70494"



A man went to the hospital for an MRI scan and was put into the machine by an attractive, young technician. Some time later, when the examination was over, he was helped out of the machine by a far older woman. The man asked wonderingly, "How long was I in there for?"

# THEATRE PROGRAMME



Tues 16 Feb	Chess	£18	Concordia, Hinckley	Leys at 6.25 pm VH at 6.30 pm Square at 6.35pm	13 Oct
Thurs 3 Mar	Goodnight, Mr Tom	£28	Milton Keynes	VH at <b>11.30</b> am Square - <b>11.35</b> am	12 Jan
Wed 13 Apr	Betrayal	£20	Market Harboro'	Leys at 6.40 pm VH at 6.45 pm Square at 6.50 pm	8 Mar
Thurs 2 June	Shadowlands	£32	Birmingham Repertory	VH at 12 noon Square - 12.05 pm	12 Apr
Thurs 8 Dec	Nutcracker (B'ham Royal Ballet)	£42	Birmingham Hippodrome	VH at 12.15 pm Square - 12.20 pm	12 Apr

**CHESS – THE MUSICAL.** By Tim Rice and the 'boys' from ABBA. Fully booked.

**GOODNIGHT, MR TOM** - Set during the dangerous build up to the Second World War, Goodnight Mister Tom follows young William Beech, who is evacuated to the idyllic English countryside and forges a remarkable and heart-warming friendship with the elderly recluse, Tom Oakley. Now fully booked. **PLEASE NOTE EARLIER START THAN USUAL FOR MILTON KEYNES.**

**BETRAYAL** by Harold Pinter explores the effects of an adulterous affair on the spouses, their illicit lovers, their family and friends. Reputedly, the play is based on an actual love affair between the playwright and a BBC arts reporter

**SHADOWLANDS** C.S. Lewis (*Chronicles of Narnia*) was comfortable when he started his teaching post at Oxford University, confident in his beliefs about God. But when Joy Davidman, an American poet and fan of his work, and her young son enter his life, his theoretical understanding of love and heartache is challenged and he finds the reality to be much harder to accept.

**NUTCRACKER** (*Birmingham Royal Ballet*) – The Christmas favourite! Book early to secure your place for this magical start to the festivities!

*June Hawkins – tel: 277 6330 or email: [jhawkins45@talktalk.net](mailto:jhawkins45@talktalk.net)*

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

**PLEASE ALSO NOTE THAT PARKING IS NOT ALWAYS AVAILABLE AT THE REAR OF THE VILLAGE HALL, SO CHECK!**

**Please book early because tickets can be reserved for a limited time only before needing to be paid for and confirmed. No refunds when tickets have been paid for, unless resold to somebody else.**