

Countesthorpe U3A Newsletter

Dec 2017

Issue 2017/2

CHAIRPERSON'S LETTER

Hello Everyone

At the time of writing, winter fast approaches. The cold wind, currently blowing from the Arctic, is beginning to penetrate. Christmas and Black Friday are looming fast. Turn on the radio and you get Westminster sleaze, Hollywood sleaze, Brexit in-fighting, offshore tax havens and, (hoorah!) yet another deeply informative Trump Tweet to give us all a much needed boost!



But there's plenty to celebrate, too. A Chinese automotive giant confirms that it aims to have its first 'street-legal' flying car on the market by 2019 and, in a separate development, buses and trucks in the UK will soon be able to run on coffee. So that's all good.

A recent article stated that many working people dream of retiring. However, it seems that, of those who do retire in Britain, one in four 'un-retire' within five years. Furthermore, 10% of the over 65s are in now paid employment – which is up from 5% in 2000. Of course, many of those currently in employment will have no choice but to work until at least 65, and possibly much later. Un-retirees have cited boredom, loneliness and lack of finance as their reasons for going back to work. There's an obvious cure for the former two - join your local U3A!

It is pleasing to note that our U3A continues to thrive - and our membership continues to grow. Our many group activities are, in the main, very well supported. The committee works hard to ensure that our U3A runs well for the benefit of everyone.

As my next letter will be published in 2018, I wish everyone an enjoyable Christmas and a very happy New Year.

Peter Bradbury
Chairperson

(TEL 01455 273604)

CLARIFICATION ON OUR 'MEMBERSHIP YEAR'

Our membership year runs from 1 April until 31 March the following year. If any new member joins after our two 'renewal opportunity' meetings in April and May, they still pay the full amount, but their full or associate membership runs only until 31 March. So, even if somebody joins, say, in November or January, they will still pay the full annual fee (it's only £13, after all!) and will be required to renew after 1 April alongside existing members.

This may seem a little hard on anyone joining late in 'our year' but we still have to pay the annual expenses, such as capitation to the Third Age Trust.

We hope that this helps to clarify the situation, and explains the reasons behind it.

If anyone has ideas to improve our Newsletter, then I would be very pleased to hear from you – just contact me by phone on 277 6330 or by email at jhawkins45@talktalk.net

CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2017

Our lunch was held at Taste Restaurant at Leicester College on Friday, 1 December and enjoyed by 116 members!

Prize Draw results:

First prize (£20 M&S giftcard)

Rex Busby

Second prize (£15 M&S giftcard)

Margaret Cronin

Third prize (£10 M&S giftcard)

Beryl Lishman

Yes, it's early to think about NEXT Christmas when *this* one is only just around the corner, but reserve this date for Taste Restaurant:

Friday, 30 November 2018

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME - NEW YEAR – NEW GROUPS TO ENJOY!

LINE DANCING

Tricia Cornforth and Maud Greasley have got together to start up a Line Dancing Group. This will be held weekly each Friday morning between 11.30 am and 12.30 pm in the Countesthorpe Village Hall. The group will get underway on 12 January (just in time to help you shed those extra pounds gained over the festive season!) £5 per session, or save by paying £20 in advance for 5 sessions!

In case you're not sure what line dancing entails, the wonderful Wikipedia informs us: *“Everyone dances alone, side by side, facing the same direction in lines or rows. Each dance consists of a sequence of steps that are repeated throughout the music. Although a variety of music may be used, the major emphasis is on country-and-western.”*



So, why not look out your cowboy hats, boots and fringed shirts (all optional!) and get on down there to the introductory meeting for a chat and to find out exactly what it entails from the instructor on Friday, 12 January! Remember – this is for beginners, so try it out! Call Tricia on 07989 549074 for more information.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Starting on 6th February, Barry Hillyard will be offering a new Classical Music group which will meet monthly on the first Tuesday at his home at 35 Station Road, Countesthorpe from 7 pm for about two hours. From discussions with one of his contacts in another U3A, the idea is to base this group initially on a series of CDs entitled “The History of Classical Music” by Richard Fawkes, read by Robert Powell. Each CD has illustrative pieces of music which can be complemented by other material from group members’ own collections, or even from YouTube or books.



If interested, please add your name to the ‘sign up’ sheet displayed in the small lounge, or contact Barry on 277 4187.

CRAFTS FOR ALL

One of our newer members, Teresa Morgan, plans to start up a group where people can meet regularly in a social environment to learn a new craft or to continue one which they already enjoy, perhaps also introducing it to others. Her initial ideas include card making, memory boxes, scrapbooking (creative photo albums), patchwork, lavender bags, sewing kits, and cushions. There may also be visiting speakers.

If interested, please add your name to the 'sign up' sheet displayed in the small lounge, or contact Teresa on 363 0489 or mobile 07882 604263, or by email at Teresa1946@virginmedia.com. After an introductory meeting, details will emerge about the pattern of future meetings, etc.



TRAVEL GROUP PLANNING MEETING

This will be held on Wednesday, 17 January at the Cornerstone, Countesthorpe (in Church grounds) from 7.30 pm. You are cordially invited to attend this event to enjoy nibbles, socialise and hopefully to bring your ideas for the Travel Group's programme of outings for the forthcoming year.

This ensures that everyone has a chance to put forward possible venues for outings. If you can also offer to help by planning an event and running the outing on the day, then so much the better! Jill and Ann remain responsible for taking bookings, organising the coach, and for collecting money and making payments, so there is not much for helpers to do in the way of administration or money handling! They are also on hand to give advice and support to make it an enjoyable and satisfying experience for the outing leader.

So, why not put on your thinking caps and come up with some great ideas for Travel Group outings that we can all enjoy in 2018! Ideas for both good weather, and not so good, are all really helpful.



Contact Jill on 277 7154

NEWS FROM SOME OF THE GROUPS

Full details can be found on our website (www.countesthorpeu3a.co.uk), on the coloured Activity Groups List, the monthly 'What's On', or in the leaflets in the display racks at monthly meetings in the Village Hall foyer

SCRABBLE

Shirley Frost on 01455 285217

A few members have left the group, but a regular attendance of 12-14 keeps things ticking over very well. We play Rummikub and Upwords as well as Scrabble. The group meets on the first Wednesday of the month at Brook Court between 2 and 4.30 pm.

BIRDWATCHING

Janet Easey on 277 2544

This group continues with an unchanged format mixing indoor talks/videos with visits to birdwatching sites. There are around 18-20 active members from a list of 30+ names. Outdoor events have mainly centred on Rutland Water and Brandon Marsh. The group pays for the small lounge even if unused, but remains solvent. Janet Easey will be taking over the group from Tony Claricoates in January 2018.

GUITAR

David Wild on 277 5881

Six or 7 members attend weekly. The group plays a variety of music styles and also sings on occasion. If you would like to join, then call David to discuss.

TRAVEL

Jill Clayton on 277 7154

The group had to postpone the October planning/social evening due to few members able to attend. It will now take place on 17 January. Outings since April have included visits to Worcester, Blenheim Palace, Cambridge, Dudmaston and a Gin Distillery. The short holiday to the North West included two NT properties, the Manchester Ship Canal, Southport and Liverpool and proved very successful. The 2018 holiday to Bembridge, IoW, has proved so popular that it had virtually sold out on the first day and is now fully subscribed, though names can be taken for a waiting list. Thanks to all those who have helped to organise the outings, and all those who have supported them as well, so as to ensure the viability of the programme.

CARE WALKING *Allen Donkin on 277 3665 or Malcolm Skerritt on 277 2599*

There has been some turnover of members, as some wanted more walks and so left to join other rambling groups. Walkers usually number in the low twenties, with some only attending in decent weather! It is proving difficult to get walk leaders – though considerable support with planning and pre-walking is provided by Allen. Some members of the group lead more than one walk. Usually the weather is kind to the group! So, if you fancy a pleasant local walk of about 5 miles on the last Thursday of each month, this is the group for you. Have a look at the short reports and pictures in the Activity Groups section of the website to see where the group goes. (And in case anybody wonders about the name of the group – CARE stands for Countryside Ambles, Refreshments Essential!)

COMPUTERS

Barry Hillyard on 277 4187

This is not really a formal group, but a facility to assist members with any IT difficulties. It tends to operate 2 or 3 times per year at present, on demand. So, if you are having difficulties with your PC or tablet, call Barry to discuss how he can help you to overcome these and get the most out of your equipment.

HANDBELLS

Pat Hillyard on 277 4187

A new member has joined, and the full complement would be 18 if all turned up! 10-12 is the average attendance which works well as there are basically six bells and so members take turns to play. The group will be performing 4 Christmas events – Countesthorpe Spectacular, Foston Church, Oak Court and the Odd Fellows in Cosby.

BEGINNERS' PHOTOGRAPHY

Barry Hillyard on 277 4187

Again, not an ongoing group, but a facility that is available when there are a few members wishing to develop their skills in digital photography or come to terms with a new camera. This short course may be offered later in the year.

NORDIC WALKING

Barry Hillyard on 277 4187

This continues with only 2 regulars plus occasional additional walkers. Walking with poles helps relieve pressure on knees and hips, as well as giving the upper body a gentle workout. You burn more calories per mile, so that has to be good if you are trying to lose a little weight. We do not 'do mud' or stiles, and so swing along pleasantly on quiet local roads and tracks. Why not turn up and see for yourself. It is not difficult – if you swing your arms as you walk, you can do it, and there are usually spare poles you can use. 9.30 – 10.30 am at Willoughby Road Playing Fields car park on the second and third Tuesday of the month.

CARPET BOWLS

The group continues to thrive with 16-18 regular players. A replacement carpet has just been purchased as one became worn out! Come along to the Scout Hut at 2 pm each Wednesday to see what fun you can have!

SWANS (Short Walks And No Stiles)

Liz Lockwood-Jones on 240 2296

There is a small turnover of membership as some new people join and others drop out. There are actually 42 names on the list but the average is 12-16 walkers. Liz plans to relinquish co-ordination of this group in March, and is seeking somebody to take it on. Walks are varied and include many of Leicester's lovely parks, some canal-side strolls and city walks as well as quiet lanes and byeways, but always end up with coffee and a pleasant chat. Some involve shared cars, others public transport. First and third Tuesdays of the month, starting at 10.30 am. Details always in What's On or on the website.

FIT FOR LIFE

Diana Lee on 277 9142

There has been a change of Instructor from Karen Bent to Debbie Cooper. The group has seen a drop in numbers over the summer, but it is expected to revive during the winter. Twelve are needed to cover costs. This class provides an age-appropriate mix of aerobic, strength and mobility exercises to music.

DISCUSSION

Liz Lockwood-Jones on 240 2296

The group has welcomed a few new members, including two gentlemen, though as usual, the group seldom reaches any conclusion! Recent topics have included Moving to a New Environment; Perks for Pensioners; To What Extent Does Terrorism Rule Our Lives?; The Impact of Fashion; and What is the Role of Sport in Our Society? The December meeting will take place in the Residents' Lounge at the new Mulberry Court in Blaby and the topic will be Hot News.

SOLO SUNDAY LUNCH

Sheila Holmes on 277 2131

This will stay as a closed group for now, as there are 22-25 members attending. The group continues to meet at Ullesthorpe Court and this is generally successful. It is difficult to find alternative venues, or to get different people to organise the lunch. There will be no Solo Lunch in December.

CREATIVE WRITING

Mikki Wilde on 277 5509

The group has lost three members but gained two new ones, so there is a gentle 'turnover' of ideas and it continues successfully. Writers work around a monthly theme, and occasionally we leave time for a workshop activity, to get the creative juices flowing! More recent themes have included: Relief; Starting Again; Routes/Roots; Darkness; It Fell From a Great Height; Reality; and Suddenly. No special talent is required, just a willingness to commit your ideas to paper and to share them with fellow members. For a look at some of our better work, why not browse through the four miscellanies we have published (Flights of Fancy, Kaleidoscope, Imaginings, Mosaic) They are all available on the website in the Creative Writing pages.

THEATRE

June Hawkins on 277 6330

This group continues to suffer from small numbers resulting in some productions being cancelled. Trips are almost always mid-week, though different days where possible, but it is dependent upon theatres' own programmes. A mix of serious plays, musical theatre and a ballet is sought, with local theatres being supported as well as visits further afield to Milton Keynes and Birmingham. The Great Gatsby at Concordia, Hinckley was well supported and was a most enjoyable show, but at the time of writing one of two productions at Market Harborough theatre has had to be cancelled, and the second "Gasping" is just about viable. In February, there is a chance to visit Hinckley Concordia for a performance of Mack and Mabel, and it is hoped that this will prove as popular as the Great Gatsby. Seat prices and coach costs continue to rise, making it more expensive than it used to be. If you have ideas for what you would like to see, please let June know, so that the Theatre group can continue to provide opportunities for those who perhaps cannot enjoy this activity without the U3A.

ALLOTMENT GARDENING

Val and Andy Grant on 277 8848

Allotment Gardening will be taken over by Val and Andy Grant, with the existing three members leaving, though available for support if necessary.

HISTORY

June Hawkins on 277 6330

The group continues with its mix of talks in the winter months, and trips out. Some of these are local, using shared cars whilst those further afield use the coach. The Planning Meeting in October successfully produced an interesting programme for 2017-18, with the short break in September to be centred on Llangollen. Pete Liddle concludes his set of six talks on the Anglo Saxons, and this is followed in February with John Martin, local guide, explaining the geological history of Bradgate Park. Future trips out will include Duxford Air Museum, Derby, Cromford Mill (nr Matlock), the Halifax Piece Hall, Middleton Hall, Soho House, Ludlow and the Portland Collection. Full details will be available at the meetings, and on the website.

FLOWER ARRANGING

Pat Quinn on 277 2399

There is a steady membership, though there has been one new member recently. Space is a limiting factor, and it is planned to retain this as a closed group, though anyone interested should speak to Pat Quinn. The group works to a programme of themes, and in January they will be undertaking leaf manipulation – it sounds painful if you are a leaf, but it should be very effective!

CHEWS

Ruth Westley on 277 1533

The group dropped from 5 to 3 members, but now has one new enthusiast. A new regime has been introduced with 2 meetings per month – one a quick weigh-in, and the other a longer meeting, with coffee. Numbers are swelling (hopefully, not waistlines)! (For those not sure about the title of this group: CHEWS = Controlled Healthy Eating With Support.) This says it all, so if you are struggling with your weight (and who won't be after the festive season!) this could really help you lose a little, with all the health benefits this brings.

GARDEN APPRECIATION

Ruth Westley on 277 1533

The group holds a planning meeting in November and generally has about 4 outings per year – sometimes in conjunction with either Travel or History Groups, and these have proved popular. One this year was to Hill Close Gardens in Warwick – a truly hidden gem! Another was in conjunction with the Travel Group, and included a visit to Cambridge Botanical Gardens. A recent visit to Batsford Arboretum was very popular and it proved to be a lovely place, in spite of dull and slightly drizzly weather. Visits to members' own gardens have been particularly successful – there are no special preparations required but it is a joy to see the different gardens and talk about them with their owners. Our remaining schedule is filled with DVDs or speakers on garden topics.

PILATES

Ursula Wild on 277 5881

This continues with its core group of between 8 and 15 members on each Tuesday afternoon (except the second in the month). Costs are held at £5 per session or £20 in advance for 5 sessions – which need not be consecutive weeks. The new Instructor, Debbie Cooper, is proving to be very good. Mats are no longer provided, so members now need to bring their own. If you want to remain supple and able to move freely, then this is the group for you!

CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS

Ursula Wild on 277 5881

Members continue to enjoy this small, closed group where they all began as novices and worked through books. The Guardian crossword is generally okay, but it is getting harder to improve. Sadly, the group cannot accommodate beginners as members are all at a similar level. There is a rule that members don't shout out answers, but put up their hands – just like being back at school! Good fun for the brain - plus good cakes, courtesy of David who kindly hosts the group in his home!

LITERATURE

From January: Barbara Marsh on 277 1989

This small group enjoys meeting monthly on the third Wednesday in the Residents' Lounge at Brook Court to discuss the book previously agreed upon. The discussions could not be considered academic, but are nevertheless enjoyable and encourage us to read with an eye to contributing to the meeting. A summary of the discussions on the set book is then written to be read out the next time, and it also appears on the website on the Literature Group's pages. Sometimes we have a specific title, at other times it may be anything by a given author, or even just any book from a particular genre. We read a wide variety of books to keep us interested, and for the Christmas meeting we will be sharing a book that we remember from our childhood days – along, of course, with some festive nibbles. Leadership of the group rotates every six months, so it is never a burden. Why not come and join us if you enjoy reading?

NOTES ON ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP AND GIFT AID FOR ALL MEMBERSHIPS

Associate Membership is ONLY available to individuals who have proof of FULL membership of another U3A. Current Associate subscription is £7.

Please remember that when an individual has kindly 'gift aided' their subscription, they MUST be paying income tax to HRMC. Tax rules and especially thresholds change, and if anyone finds that they are no longer paying income tax it is THEIR RESPONSIBILITY to inform David Wild (Membership Secretary) on 0116 277 5881 so that their name can be removed from our Gift Aid claims. This is really important and we ask for your help in ensuring that we remain 'legal'! Please do continue to 'gift aid', though, as long as you are eligible. Thank you for your co-operation.

If you have changed your address, or phone number,
It is **REALLY IMPORTANT** that you let David Wild (our Membership Secretary) know (on 277 5881) so that we have your current details on file in case we need to contact you.

THIS IS ESSENTIAL FOR TRIPS OR HOLIDAYS!

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

HISTORY GROUP PROGRAMME FOR 2018

You do not have to be a 'member' of the History Group to enjoy any of the outings or talks which we have on offer. For the talks – just turn up at the Methodist Church on the day for 10 am until about noon, with a coffee break, and cost just £4. For outings, booking is essential – just visit the History table in the small lounge at monthly meetings, or call June on 0116 277 6330 or email at: jhawkins45@talktalk.net

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| 14 Dec: | <i>Continuing with the talks in Peter Liddle's 'Anglo Saxons' series:</i> |
| 18 Jan: | The Viking Invasion and the Danelaw |
| 15 Feb: | Late Saxon Leicestershire and the Norman Conquest |
| | Volcanoes, Deserts & Ice |
| | <i>The geological story of Bradgate Park by John Martin, Bradgate Guide and historian</i> |
| 16 March | Duxford Air Museum |
| | <i>Historic airfield and museum of aviation history in Cambridgeshire.</i> |
| April | Derby |
| Date tba | <i>Proposed tour of Cathedral; free time for Museum and Art Gallery, Pickford's House (museum of Georgian times), or Britain's first purpose built Market Hall.</i> |
| May | Cromford Mill, Nr Matlock |
| Date tba | <i>Cromford Mills is the home of Sir Richard Arkwright's first mill complex, birthplace of the modern factory system and internationally recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. What happened here in Cromford in the 1770's changed the world we live in.</i> |
| June | Halifax Piece Hall |
| Date tba | <i>Newly refurbished and recently re-opened, this magnificent building around a quadrangle housed the Yorkshire woollen merchants trading. Provides a fascinating insight into local industry of the past, with boutique shops, eateries, etc.</i> |
| July | Middleton Hall nr Tamworth |
| Date tba | <i>Middleton has two entries in the Domesday book and the oldest building on site dates from 1285. A Site of Special Scientific Interest with nature trails around the oldest man-made lake in Warwickshire with formal gardens, and an early example of a heated Walled Garden.</i> |
| August | Soho House, Birmingham |
| Date tba | <i>Guided tour of the Georgian home of famous industrialist Matthew Boulton, plus gardens, visitor centre and café.</i> |
| Sept | Ludlow |
| Date tba | <i>Thriving medieval market town and an architectural gem situated on a cliff above the River Teme. Castle, museum, shops, gourmet food!</i> |
| 24-27 Sept | Llangollen (3-night short break) |
| | <i>Boscobel House en route; canal boat trip over Pontcysyllte aqueduct, steam train ride, visits to Plas Newydd + either Chirk or Powis Castle. Attingham Park on way home. ALL SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION!</i> |
| Oct | Portland Collection (nr Worksop) |
| Date tba | <i>The historic Portland Collection of fine and decorative art has been amassed over the centuries by the Dukes of Portland.</i> |

KEEPING EVERYBODY INFORMED!

Our next Newsletter will be published in June 2018, and news from the Groups will be much appreciated, or short articles about holidays or trips, etc.

Copy deadline is 31 May 2018, please.

In the meantime, our monthly printed “What’s On” and the website will keep you all up-to-date with what is happening. Group Leaders can assist by letting me know of any events, visits, or changes to routine meeting patterns at least **10 days before our monthly meeting** on the second Tuesday of the month, to ensure inclusion in the next issue. Many thanks to all contributors this year!

*Contact me by email at: jhawkins45@talktalk.net or
call on 0116 277 6330*

THERE’S NO PLACE LIKE “HOME”!

Please remember that the latest news or details of changes (eg in the festive season) are on the **HOME PAGE – STOP PRESS!** Some users always go direct to the full “What’s On” section, and so may miss out on important information.

There’s No Place Like Home – as the old song says!

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 NOTE ON TRAVEL INSURANCE

When participating in a U3A Group holiday you are responsible for taking out your own holiday/travel insurance. Your Organiser may ask you for details of your policy number, and perhaps a ‘next of kin’ contact so that these are available in the unlikely event of an emergency.

MONTHLY MEETING DETAILS

Always held on the **SECOND Tuesday** of the month
at Countesthorpe Village Hall

Doors open 1.30 pm; speaker at 2.00 pm followed by refreshments

| Date | Title of Talk | Speaker |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| 12 Dec | A Musical History Show | Steve Allen |
| 9 Jan | Medical Detection Dogs | TBA |
| 13 Feb | David Beatty: The Last Naval Hero | Roy Smart |
| 13 Mar | The Work of Mercy Ships | TBA |
| 10 Apr | Life Can Be Funny | Pat Hall |
| 8 May | AGM | |

YOUR U3A COMMITTEE 2017-8

| | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Chairman: | Peter Bradbury | 01455 274604 |
| Deputy Chair: | Sherry Burditt | 277 1212 |
| Secretary: | Christine Claricoates | 277 5251 |
| Treasurer: | Graham Cox | 284 8949 |
| Membership Secretary | David Wild | 277 5881 |
| Information & Publicity: | June Hawkins | 277 6330 |
| Speaker Secretary: | Helen Bull | 223 8239 |
| Groups Co-ordinator: | Ursula Wild | 277 5881 |
| Technical Officer: | Barry Hillyard | 277 4187 |
| Committee member: | Beryl Lishman | 277 0405 |
| Committee member: | Sheila Baldwin | 319 2801 |
| Committee member: | Eunice Lucas | 247 8664 |

Full details of all our groups, events, trips and holidays can be found on the monthly 'What's On' bulletin, provided at the monthly meetings with copies in the Rainbow Shop and Library. Or, why not visit our website for listings of all that is happening, and full details of our various groups. And don't forget the important items in the STOP PRESS section of the HOME PAGE!

www.countesthorpeu3a.co.uk