



u3a
Countesthorpe

June - December 2022

CHAIRPERSON'S LETTER

Dear Friends

There should be a new chairman this month as my tenure of the post ends with the AGM. The new chairman will be decided at the first Committee meeting after the AGM, which is clearly too short a timeframe for him or her to produce a letter! Check the back page of the Newsletter for the new appointments.



I hope you are all becoming more confident in social interactions now that lockdown has ended, and we can once again get together in groups.

I know that I feel better for being able to get out again with some reasoning around solely to get exercise is not particularly inspiring. Walking around to observe birds, walking from one end of a bowls mat to the other, visiting places such as Dunster, Bury St. Edmunds, Upton House, etc give more satisfying exercise with people to talk with. There may even be more exercise, but it is easier with a purpose and company.

Barry Hillyard

Chairman (2021-2) (Tel: 0115 277 4187)



Please see the back page for full details of the Committee members and their roles for 2022-23

THE 'WESTON SUPERMARE HOLIDAY' – A REPORT

Monday morning, 21st February was cold, wet and windy which didn't bode well for the rest of the week. However, halfway down the motorway the sun was obviously trying desperately to get through and broken cloud revealed large patches of blue sky.

Most of the party opted to visit Aerospace Bristol, the remainder deciding to spend their three hours in Bristol itself. The museum dedicated itself to aero, space and transport engineering developments produced within the Bristol area over the last 130 years. Exhibits included early biplanes, helicopters, Concorde, Aston Martin and Bristol cars, plus the Skylark rocket and the Bloodhound missile. A fascinating visit. Even the time flew by!

Many of us, having spent a previous holiday at the Royal Grosvenor Hotel, were very familiar with its layout and routines – the main routine being the gin and tonic session before moving to the dining room.

Tuesday saw us depart to Newport (South Wales). We planned to go first to the museum and then to the cathedral. However, we spent so long in the museum/art gallery (plus the necessary coffee break) that we didn't have enough time for the cathedral. Just as well as it was closed.

We then travelled to Tredegar House (a National Trust property) where we roamed the house and gardens. By this time the weather had improved from being cold and drizzly to relatively acceptable. We were back at the hotel in plenty of time to prepare for our . . . G&T!

After yet another hearty breakfast Wednesday saw us setting out for a scenic coastal ride to Dunster, a charming village near Minehead. The village grew up around the castle which was built high on the neighbouring hill in the eleventh century. Here we roamed the streets and shops exploring the beautiful church of St. George and the working water mill, the origins of which date back to the fifteenth century and which grinds and bags wholemeal flour for the public to buy (National Trust).

After a relatively short coach trip we arrived in the picturesque village of Lynmouth. We decided to follow the gorge path to the cliff railway which connects Lynmouth to Lynton. The funicular railway is a tremendous feat of Victorian engineering operating two cable-linked cars on gravity and water power. Lynton found us in a remarkably extensive craft market displaying a tremendous variety of high quality crafts. But the need of

refreshments was too great to resist, so a local café fulfilled this need with excellent hot chocolate and coffee.

A longer day out meant a later return to the hotel, but we ensured that we were in plenty of time to repair to the bar for a chat and G&T before dinner.

After a couple of days of good weather things took a bit of a dive, being noticeably cooler on Thursday as we made our way to Glastonbury. If you have a burning desire to dress as a Goth or witch, or practice mixing weird potions, this is the place to be. We decided to have a coffee instead. However, we did spend time browsing in some unusual (and rather mysterious) shops.

On to Taunton in the afternoon. Although we spent some time in the town, the comprehensive museum had much to offer visitors – not least warmth and refreshments! We arrived back at the hotel in good time to meet for our chat together with . . . guess what?!

Friday being the last day meant packing up for the journey home, stopping at Cirencester on the way. Wandering around the shops and market, and visiting the beautiful church of St John the Baptist was lovely. A hearty lunch at an excellent restaurant sealed the whole holiday experience before the journey back to Countesthorpe.

In short we had a most pleasant holiday with everyone appearing to be in very good spirits throughout. Grateful thanks are due to Jill and Anne for all their hard work arranging it for us; not forgetting Sue Wyllie (for being bus monitor and her impressive ability to count passengers!).

Report by Peter Bradbury



If anyone has any ideas to improve our Newsletter, or any contributions for the next issue, 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



ALL ABOUT MEMBERSHIP – HOW TO JOIN OR RENEW

To join as a NEW member, please either click on the attachment and download the form from our website OR ask the Membership Secretary at a monthly meeting. All instructions are on the form. Subscriptions as below:



To RENEW your membership FOR 2022/23, subscriptions are:

Full Membership: £18 (when paying by BACS) or **£18.50 (per person)**
(When paying by cheque or cash).

Associate membership (with proof of full membership of another U3A) costs **£10 by BACS or £10.50 (per person)** by cheque or cash.

1. There is no need to complete another membership application form
2. **BY BANK TRANSFER:** Payee: The Countesthorpe U3A. Sort Code: 40-12-35 A/c no: 01402889 It is **IMPORTANT** that you use your U3A membership number as the reference, FOLLOWED by your name. If you do not know your number, call Barry or June who will help you.
3. **BY CHEQUE:** payable to "**COUNTESTHORPE U3A**", to our Membership Secretary, Mr B Hillyard, 35 Station Rd, Countesthorpe, Leicester LE8 5TA. You can also use the U3A's deposit box at the Library/Parish Office.
4. **BY CASH:** To our Membership Secretary, Mr B Hillyard, 35 Station Rd, Countesthorpe, Leicester LE8 5TA.



IF YOUR MEMBERSHIP HAS LAPSED, then please follow the instructions for new members as above. Fees are as shown. If you are unsure whether your membership lapsed, then please contact Barry on 277 4187.



MEMBERSHIP CARDS will not be issued, as little use is made of them. Proof of membership can be provided on request to Barry, if this is required.



KEEPING OUR RECORDS UP-TO-DATE: If you have changed your phone number(s), address or email, please advise Barry or June to enable us to update our system and thus keep in touch with you.

CLARIFICATION OF OUR REVISED 'MEMBERSHIP YEAR'

Our membership year formerly ran from 1 April until 31 March the following year. However, this caused administrative difficulties, coming as it did a month prior to the AGM. Therefore the Executive Committee took the decision to move the membership year to be from 1 June to 31 May the following year.

Thus, all paid-up members on 31 March 2022 automatically received a two month FREE extension to their membership until 31 May 2022. Thereafter, renewals will fall due on 1 June each year.

As before, if any new member joins during the year they will still pay the full amount, but their full or associate membership runs only until following 31 May. So, even if somebody joins, say, in April or May, they will still pay the full annual fee (it's currently only £18, after all!) and will be required to renew after 1 June alongside existing members.

Note that 50p is added if paying by cash/cheque, as we now incur bank charges. FULL: £18 by BACS or £18.50 cash/cheque;
ASSOCIATE: £10 by BACS or £10.50 cash/cheque

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

We hope that this helps to explain and clarify the situation.



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. The current Associate subscription is £10 if paying by BACS or £10.50 by cash or cheque.

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 Barry Hillyard (Membership Secretary) on 0116 277 4187 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.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO COUNTSTHORPE U3A AGM 2022

After a near total shutdown due to the COVID virus lockdown we began restarting activities in August 2021. As I write I think all groups are back up and running - though some could do with more members. These include Cryptic Crosswords, Handbells, and Country Dancing. Sadly, we have lost a number of groups, likely as a result of our changing lifestyles over the last two years, waning interest or the lack of a Group Leader. These include Photography, Silver Strollers, Craft Circle, Nordic Walking, Pilates and Garden Appreciation. We remain thankful for our Group Leaders who have enabled us to continue with a wide range of activities.

Our membership is currently around 410 – about 100 below pre-COVID levels. We continue to attract a steady flow of new members, who are most welcome.

This year, as you may already be aware, your committee took the decision to alter the membership year so that it now runs from 1 June to 31 May. In effect this gives all existing members two free months. The reason for this is if we needed to revise the subscription rates, this could only be done at the AGM, which was AFTER the renewal date. So, we were in the position of having to wait another 10 months before being able to bring in changes. Given the rapidly changing situation, we need to be more responsive. Hence the change, which allows us to propose new subscriptions in May, to come into force the following month. David Hetterley, our Treasurer, will also give a little more information in his report.

The monthly meetings have had some good speakers – though not many of us have the requisite number of gardeners to utilise the services of the speaker in April! Members are beginning to have the confidence to return to the meetings, and attendance is slowly increasing.

U3a Holidays have begun again with a successful return visit to Weston-Super-Mare. Another holiday is planned for later in the year, to Torquay. History visits continue to be well-supported, and it is hoped that the general Outings programme will resume in the next few months. There have been several theatre visits, including visits to the Hinckley Concordia and Curve theatres, whilst in April we enjoyed a trip to Birmingham Repertory.

I must express my thanks to all the Group Leaders, and to my fellow committee members who have provided a great service to the members in organising our U3A.

A Few Riddles for you to Ponder

1. What time is it when an elephant sits on a fence?
2. What gets wet when drying?
3. What can go up a chimney down, but can't go down a chimney up?
4. What can you hold in your right hand, but never in your left hand?
5. What can you catch, but not throw?
6. What kind of band never plays music?
7. What has one eye, but can't see?
8. What can travel all around the world without leaving its corner?
9. What two things can you never eat for breakfast?
10. What kind of room has no doors or windows?
11. What do Alexander the Great and Winnie the Pooh have in common?
12. Before Mount Everest was discovered, what was the highest mountain in the world?
13. What is the end of everything?
14. What part of the chicken has the most feathers?
15. What has a bottom at the top?
16. How far can you walk into the woods
17. What is red, and smells like blue paint?
18. What is the difference between a jeweler and a jailer?
19. What has many teeth but cannot bite?
20. What has lots of eyes but cannot see?

Answers later on!



Words of Wisdom

Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do (*John Wooden*)

The secret of staying young is to live honestly, eat slowly and lie about your age. (*Lucille Ball*)

Your secrets are safe with your friends – mainly because they can't remember them either.

These days, it's the doctors who tell you to slow down, not the police.

The u3a Movement is 40 Years Old!

To mark the **u3a** movement's 40th Anniversary in 2022, the Trust is creating a **u3a** anniversary woodland situated in the Brecon Beacons.

u3a members' contributions to the u3a woodland will help benefit the environment, wildlife and climate for future generations. The movement's target is for 5,000 trees to be planted between October 2021 and March 2022.

This project was launched in members' magazine, Third Age Matters. **u3a** members can buy individual trees or a copse of 100 trees and u3as are also encouraged to plant trees within their own communities.

The money for the trees goes towards establishing the trees and part of the cost for each tree is reserved as future payments for maintenance. Once they are fully established, they will be looked after as part of routine woodland management. We are fortunate to have secured the Woodland in an area of outstanding natural beauty and the trees will be expertly looked after by skilled arborists.

To support this initiative, Countesthorpe **u3a** has purchased 5 trees at a cost of £30. Here is our 'certificate'



NEWS FROM SOME OF THE GROUPS

Full details can be found on our website (www.countesthorpeu3a.co.uk), or 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

On 10 March we were able to hold a Group Leaders' Meeting at long last – the first since November 2019! It was good to get together again, and to hear an update on what has been happening in our groups. I'm sure that ALL members will join me in thanking our GLs for their ongoing work to ensure a flourishing **u3a**.

*June Hawkins
Groups Co-ordinator*

BIRDWATCHING

Janet Easey on 277 2544

The Birdwatching Group started up again in July 2021 with a visit to Brandon Marsh. Since then we have been every month, except August, to a variety of sites with a particularly outstanding, if cold, trip to Draycote Water in January. Sadly, often the cafes have not been as good as before the lockdown, but the birds have been diverse and interesting.



THEATRE

Janine Tibbles on 07970648979 or Gill Brown on 07757 007025

Recent visits this year have included the Hinckley Concordia pantomime "Goldilocks", followed in February by "Porridge". Both were very enjoyable, especially Goldilocks! A visit to the Birmingham Repertory theatre for the matinee performance of Michael Murpurgo's "Private Peaceful" (the author of the fabulous War Horse) followed in April, and in June we return to Curve for a performance of "Cluedo" – based on the popular board game, of course.



WALKING (CARE)

Allen Donkin on 277 3665

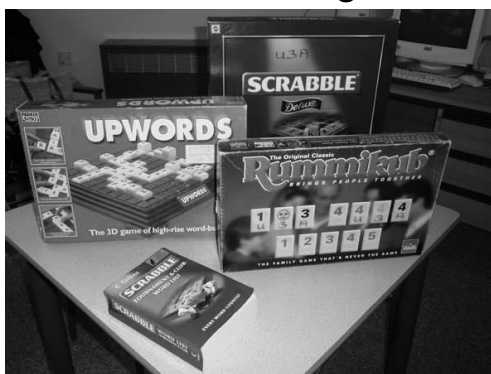
The group restarted walking in June 21 and the group size is almost up to pre-pandemic levels. New walkers are encouraged, and it would be good to have offers to lead some of the walks. Support and advice is freely available. Reports and pictures of our latest 6 walks appear on the website – Activity Groups section.



SCRABBLE

Carol Kenneth on 277 8999

About 10 or 12 regulars meet up to enjoy not only Scrabble,



Rummikub and Upwords, but now also a new game called Sequence. Why not go along and enjoy a game in friendly company on the first Wednesday of the month from 2 pm at Brook Court Residents' Lounge.

SOLO SUNDAY LUNCH

Hilary Natzel on 277 1176, or Carol Kenneth on 277 8999

Solo lunches began again in June and now have regular attendances of between 18 and 20. Some new venues have been tried out, including Badger's Mount, VIETA and the Crown at Tur Langton. More new ones on the way! Sign up and select your meal in the small lounge at monthly meetings, or call Hilary or Carol.



HOLIDAYS

Jill Clayton on 277 7154

This year saw a very enjoyable February visit to Weston-Super-Mare. Peter Bradbury has written an entertaining account of the holiday



earlier in this newsletter. There is another holiday planned for September. This will be to Torquay, with a steam railway theme. At the time of writing, this is fully booked, but Jill is always willing to take names for a waiting list in case of last minute cancellations.

SILVER STROLLERS

Sadly, this group, designed as a response to the need for people to have a shorter, and more gentle-paced walk even than SWANS, has not had sufficient interest. So, those who did want the scaled-down version may revert to SWANS, but perhaps walk part of the way and join up for the essential coffee afterwards.

HISTORY

June Hawkins on 277 6330

Our winter programme concluded in January with yet another fascinating talk from Peter Liddle – this time dealing with the Civil War period. Then in February, we were treated to a look at the history of 17th Century Coventry. This will be followed up later in the year with a visit to explore the history of this city. In March we visited the fascinating Museum of Brands in Notting Hill – another postponed destination – to explore 200 years of social change, culture and lifestyle. In April there was an outing to Bury St Edmunds – a very pleasant town with lots to explore. May saw another long-deferred visit to Upton Hall and gardens. On both occasions we were able to enjoy good weather which always enhances a day out!



At the time of writing, we are looking forward to visits to Historic Coventry, Chedworth Roman Villa (with time in Moreton-in-Marsh or Stow-on-the-Wold) and to the Workhouse and Southwell. Check out What's On and the website for details. Peter Liddle will return in the winter time to give three more of his fascinating talks.

There is no October planning meeting this year, but a programme of events up to summer 2023 is currently being arranged and we can all look forward to a busy 2023.

Thanks once again to all those who have helped to organise and lead outings, and assisted at talks and with bookings this year. It is truly a team effort which keeps us all interested, entertained and informed!

LINE DANCING

Maud Greasley on 277 1946



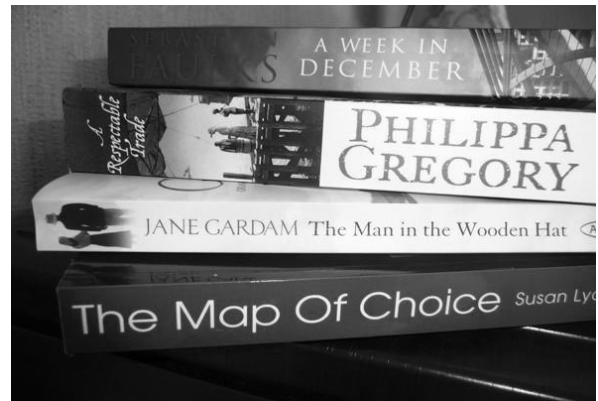
The group continues to be popular, and sees a group of between 20 and 30 dancers each time.

Every Friday in the Village Hall between 11.30 am and 12.30 pm. You are most welcome to come along!

LITERATURE

Helen Bull on 223 8329

We continue to enjoy a wide range of books – a few of which have had an eastern theme, and included “The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane” by Lisa See, “The Woman in the White Kimono” by Ana Johns and the “Architect’s Apprentice” by Eli Shafak. “A Single Thread” by Tracey Chevalier brought us back home to the post-war period of Winchester cathedral embroiderers and bell-ringers. Variety is the spice of life! Our six most recent choices and a brief summary of our discussions are all to be found in the Activity Groups section of the website. We would happily welcome new members, who would bring an even greater breadth of ideas for our future reading. Group leadership rotates every six months, so is not onerous!



CREATIVE WRITING

Mikki Wilde on 277 5509

We are persevering with getting back into creative scribbling and much enjoy meeting up to find out each other’s unique interpretation of our monthly theme! Recent themes have included “Strength”, and



writing as if we ourselves were a clock and describing what we saw! Why not come along and join us – you do not have to be an author – just have an interest in the written word, and a willingness to share your writing with a friendly and supportive group.

KURLING

Ian Paterson on 277 6259

Somewhere between 3 and 13 kurlers duel in the Village Hall between 11 and 12 noon each Wednesday. (*Duelling in terms of noise levels with the Ukulele group in the next room that is, not with each other!*)

A friendly, fun morning, with 'push sticks' for those who find bending rather a challenge!



COUNTRY DANCING

Patsy Paterson on 277 6259



About a dozen dancers currently attend in the Village Hall on the second and fourth Mondays of the month. The session is from 2-3 pm and costs just £1.50.

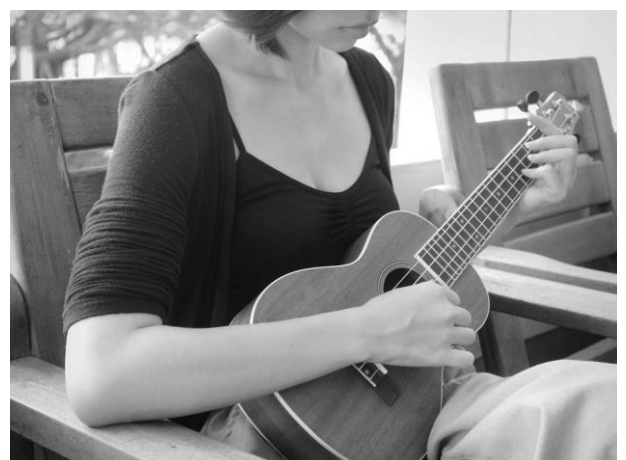
However, we are really keen to see some more dancers, so why not come along – just bring comfy shoes and a sense of humour and

give it a try! We enjoy lots of different dances and there is always help to get your steps right!

UKULELE

David Wild on 277 5881

A reduced group kept on strumming via Zoom during the pandemic, but are now able to resume their Wednesday morning 11 am-12 noon slot in the small lounge at the Village Hall. The group has gained a few new members, and having also advanced its repertoire will be performing as part of the Village's Jubilee celebrations. They regularly outdo the Kurling Group in the hall next door in terms of noise levels, and definitely keep them entertained as they play!



SWANS

Pauline Woodward on 07936 555048

Our traditional early spring walk from Wistow to Newton Harcourt to wonder at the carpet of snowdrops in the churchyard was 'rained off' so we enjoyed some good company and a coffee in the Rural Centre instead. However, improving weather has allowed us to enjoy walks which are too muddy in the winter, including Market Harborough's Union Wharf and Thornton Reservoir. We can also enjoy the many local canal towpaths with walks such as the Abbey Park canal walk, Foston Locks and along the Grand Union from Kilby Bridge to Crow Mills. We meet at the start of each walk at 10.30 am on the first and third Tuesdays of each month, and guarantee a coffee stop at the end! Details are always on the website and in What's On.



DISCUSSION

Liz Lock-wood-Jones on 240 2296

Numbers have not fully recovered from the pandemic, though we see around 10 regulars for each session. This is actually a good number, as everyone gets a chance to be heard. Our topics are broad, and inevitably become broader as we stray a little from each topic! But a good time is had by all, and it is very interesting to air the differing viewpoints amongst good friends. We meet on the fourth Friday 10 - noon at Brook Court.



CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS

Ursula Wild on 277 5881

The group is very keen to find some new members. If anyone would be interested in joining us to find out more about this fascinating subject they will be made very welcome. We are just about to go back to the basics of it all, so if you like ordinary crosswords and are wanting to see what cryptic crosswords are all about do come along and have a go.



This is a friendly, relaxed group where we take part in a variety of aerobic and dance routines. You can pump it up, or tone it down – to suit your own level and participate in the routines in an easy-going, fun atmosphere. It also includes stretching and balance exercises with warm up/cool down time. This class improves your fitness levels and enhances your sense of balance. Why not join us in the Village Hall each Monday (*not bank holidays*) between 11.30 am – 12.30 pm.



Answers to the Riddles

1. Time to fix the fence	11. The middle name
2. A towel	12. Mount Everest – just not yet discovered!
3. An umbrella	13. The letter “g”
4. Your left hand	14. The outside
5. A cold	15. Your legs
6. A rubber band	16. Halfway, after that you begin walking out
7. A needle	17. Red paint
8. A postage stamp	18. A jeweller sells watches, a jailer watches cells
9. Lunch and dinner	19. A comb
10. A mushroom	20. A potato



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. Visit our website for listings of all that is happening, and full details of our various groups. The **STOP PRESS** section of the **HOME PAGE** has all the important messages and the latest news!

www.countesthorpeu3a.co.uk

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 July	Georgi Markov and the Poison Umbrella Murder	Paul Barwick
9 Aug	Fool's Gold Performance	Steve and Carol Robson
13 Sept	The History of Jewellery	Jason Middleton
11 Oct	Time Through the Ages	John Hope
8 Nov	30 Years Quit Gamblers Anonymous	Paul Isherwood
13 Dec	Unwrapping Christmas Carols	Helen Astrid

YOUR U3A COMMITTEE 2022-23

Chairman:	David Hebblewhite	07480 852233
Deputy Chair:	Barry Hillyard	277 4187
Secretary:	Janine Tibbles	07970 648979
Treasurer:	David Hetterley	277 7703
Membership Secretary:	Barry Hillyard	277 4187
Information & Publicity:	June Hawkins	277 6330
Speaker Secretary:	Beryl Lishman	277 0405
Groups Co-ordinator:	June Hawkins	277 6330
Shadow Groups Co-ord:	Gill Brown	275 2525
Shadow Treasurer:	Jill Clayton	277 7154
Shadow Membership Sec:	Dorothy Ivatt	07411 163396
Shadow Info & Publicity:	David Norris	277 3605
Shadow Secretary:	Beryl Lishman	277 0405
Shadow Speaker Sec:	Janine Tibbles	07970 648979

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Our next Newsletter will be published in December 2022, and news from the Groups will be much appreciated, or short articles about holidays or outings or any new or proposed groups, etc. **Copy deadline is 15 November 2022, please.**

Contact me: jhawkins45@talktalk.net or 0116 277 6330