



Dec 2022 – May 23

CHAIRPERSON'S LETTER

Greetings to all our Members

This is my first letter to you as your Chairperson and it is a great privilege for me to share my thoughts with you at this time.

It strikes me that we are very fortunate to be able to meet together as the **u3a** and benefit from the simple pleasure of taking part in the many activities that are on offer, the opportunity to learn and develop new skills, to enjoy making new friendships and feel part of an organisation in which we are valued. All these vital and valuable benefits are only possible through the commitment of you as members but especially through the unstinting contribution of group leaders in coordinating and leading group activities. What makes this more remarkable is that the leaders are all volunteers who are willing to offer their time and talents to us and who want to give something back for the benefit of others.



As you look at all the different activities that we are running as a **u3a**, use a moment to take stock of the variety and scope of what is being offered at the present time. COVID has of course had its impact and some activities have come to an end as numbers have been affected. Some groups have also come to a natural end. However, there are some new activities in the pipeline to look out for. If there is an activity that you would be willing to explore and even to run then please do let the Committee know. We will be only too happy to encourage you and support you!

Meanwhile, Christmas is of course approaching fast and we do have a wonderful Christmas Lunch to look forward to. Hoping that this Christmas will be special for all of you and that the New Year will bring its blessings to you.

With every best wish

David Hebblewhite
Chairperson (Tel: 0116 479 0945)

CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2022

98 of us enjoyed a great start to our Festive Season with our usual excellent lunch, courtesy of Taste Restaurant at Leicester College. The students really do an excellent job of looking after us, decorating the tables, and producing and serving a really good choice of meals.

Congratulations to the Prize Draw Winners this year:

1st Prize:	Sue Wyllie
2nd Prize:	Dorothy Ivatt
3rd Prize:	Jill Clayton

Save this date for our next Christmas Lunch: Friday, 1 December 2023



THE WISH

Mark blew out the seven candles on his birthday cake, but as fast as he blew them out, they re-lit. Everyone laughed and encouraged him to keep blowing, so that his wish would come true.

“If the candles don’t stay out when I blow them, does that mean my wish won’t come true?” Mark asked.

His mother, concerned that he was getting upset, tried to reassure him, “No, no. Your wish will come true for each time the candles went out.”

Mark went very quiet and left the trick candles to burn out on their own.

His mother asked, “Why didn’t you blow the candles out, Mark?”

He looked up at his mother with a worried look on his angelic face.

“I don’t want that many kittens. I only wished for one.”

*Contribution from Teresa Morgan – for the Creative Writing Group
on the theme on ‘Blew’.*

THE 'TORQUAY HOLIDAY' – A REPORT

The sign on the outskirts of the town read “Torquay – Britain’s Riviera” and for the five days we were there it certainly lived up to its boast, as the weather was lovely – mainly sunny and always warm.

Because of the Queen’s funeral we were unable to visit Killerton House on the way down, as all National Trust properties were closed. However, that meant that we arrived early and were able to walk along the sea front in a leisurely way, admiring the view across the bay. Torquay still retains some of its Victorian atmosphere and you can imagine gentlemen in frock coats and ladies in long skirts strolling beside us.

On Tuesday we enjoyed a nostalgic trip on a steam train from Paignton to Kingswear. We all swapped stories of childhood steam train experiences and the War was mentioned quite a lot. I suppose we must be the last generation to remember platforms crowded with soldiers and khaki kitbags. At Kingswear we were taken on a ferry to Dartmouth for a cruise along the River Dart, which gave us a great view of castles, Britannia Naval College and Agatha Christie’s house hiding amongst the trees on the riverbank. Incidentally, if you wanted to look round the house it’s quite a difficult journey; you really need a car or taxi.

We chose to go into Brixham on Wednesday. It’s a very attractive town with plenty of coffee shops and bars, and a splendid walk along the seafront.

Thursday began with another convivial ride on a steam train through the lush Devon countryside to Buckfastleigh, after which we visited Buckfast Abbey. This Abbey is absolutely wonderful. The building itself is stunning and is surrounded by beautiful gardens, which add to the sense of spirituality and tranquillity. The day was rounded off by a visit to Widecombe-in-the-Moor with its impressive church and memories of Tom Pearce and his Grey Mare.

On the way home we were lucky to visit the Steam Museum of the Great Western Railway (God’s Wonderful Railway), and it is a triumph - full of personal memories, reconstructed rooms, gigantic steam trains and great photos. It appeals to all ages – certainly to old folk and also to the junior school children that were running around excitedly.

Altogether it was a great trip and my only complaint was that when I got on the scales at home, the large breakfasts and evening meals had taken their toll!

Report by Christine Claricoates

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.

LIVING WELL IN LATER LIFE

We are offering a new monthly group, led by David Hebblewhite, over six months which is aimed at helping us to live well in later life. There will be a chance to look together at the opportunities and the challenges that later life brings to us in a positive, thoughtful and hopefully humorous way. Some of the topics on offer include battling stereotypes, health, coping with loss, money matters and legal matters, with some visiting speakers.

Do come and join us for our first meeting which will take place at 2.00 pm on Thursday 26th January in the Small Lounge in the Village Hall, Station Road, Countesthorpe. Subsequent meetings will be on the last Thursday of the month. We look forward to seeing you there.



How to Reach the Top

In common with an awful lot of folks we have been watching the World Cup on the television and were struck by the look of confidence and cockiness of some of the players, Ronaldo in particular. After a while we considered that he probably has every right to be so self-confident. How did he get to be that way?

This question applies to sports people as well as anyone in the performing arts. Firstly a person needs to love the sport, play or musical instrument with a certain passion. Then a considerable natural talent needs to be present. This all needs to be followed up by a huge volume of practice which leads to a level of ability far in excess of the norm. What is then needed is the self-confidence to be in the right place with the right people and to say, "I can do that - look at me." OK, that is where luck comes in, but these are the steps to get to the top.

How does a person get to be a group leader or organiser with the U3A? What is needed is a lack of awareness of the people around. Somebody will say, "Who can lead the xxx group?" All will take a step back and the leader will be left standing at the front on his or her own!



Seriously – if you would like to lead a group, there is a lot of support available. Whether it is taking over an existing group or starting up something new – we have the 'toolkit' of help and support to make it a success for you!

Call the Groups Co-ordinator, June Hawkins on 0116 277 6330 or 07985 013015 or email jhawkins45@talktalk.net

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.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023

NB: AGM DEFERRED ONE MONTH DUE TO CORONATION OF HM KING CHARLES III

This will be in the Village Hall, Countesthorpe
on 13 June 2023 commencing at 2 pm
followed by a speaker or entertainment

A G E N D A

1. Approval and Acceptance of 2022 AGM Minutes
2. Chairman's Report
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Adoption of Accounts
5. Appointment of Independent Examiner for 2022
6. Election of Executive Committee

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

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

BIRDWATCHING

Janet Easey on 277 2544

The Birdwatching Group has continued to enjoy monthly outings around the surrounding counties. Up to 20 of us have seen a wide variety of mostly water birds, a highlight of which was seeing about 20 Egrets on a small island in Rutland Water. We also saw, as well as Whooper Swans, many male Pochard at Welney and learnt that while the males are in chilly Norfolk, the females sun themselves on Spanish beaches! Wise girls!



THEATRE

Janine Tibbles on 07970648979 or Gill Brown on 07757 007025

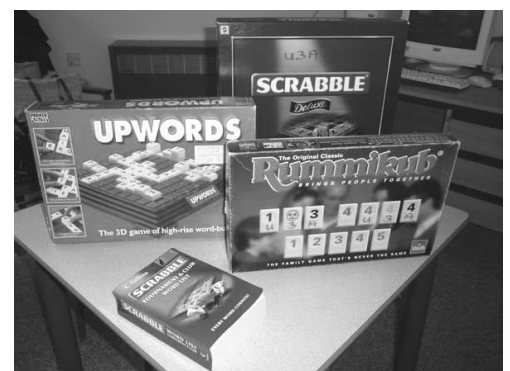
Well, our first year has successfully completed with a wide variety of shows being offered – usually one each month. Unfortunately, prices are rising, as are coach hire costs. We have tried to offer a few matinee performances to appeal to different people, and this is to continue. We hope that members will continue to support this group.



SCRABBLE

Carol Kenneth on 277 8999

About a dozen members enjoy Scrabble, Upwords and Rummikub in Brook Court's Residents' Lounge on the first Wednesday of the month from 2 pm. New members are always welcomed, and help and guidance is available for those who would like to learn a new game.



WALKING (CARE)

Allen Donkin on 277 3665

Whilst we lost some members due to COVID restrictions and simply ageing, we usually find about 20-25 walkers turn up on the last Thursday of each month. We walk for about 4½ or 5 miles, with members taking turns to lead walks. Unfortunately there was no walk one month as no-one had offered to lead it. So, we are always keen to see new walkers, and especially if they would offer to lead one walk a year. Reports and pictures of our latest 6 walks appear on the website – see the Activity Groups section.



SOLO SUNDAY LUNCH

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



Solo lunches continue to be popular and we now have regular attendances of about 22 diners. We continue to try out new venues and would like to see a few new members. So don't eat alone on a Sunday – this is a really good way to make new friends. 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 visit to Torquay. Christine Claricoates has written an entertaining account of the holiday earlier in this newsletter. There is another holiday planned for May 2023. This will be to Eastbourne, staying in a seafront hotel, with a programme of visits included. Many of these will be to National Trust properties. At the time of writing, this is almost fully booked, but Jill is always willing to take names for a waiting list in case of last minute cancellations.



HISTORY

June Hawkins on 277 6330

We have enjoyed visits to Historic Coventry, Chedworth Roman Villa (with time for lunch in Stow-on-the-Wold) and to the Workhouse and Southwell. Peter Liddle returned in October to give the first of three more of his fascinating talks covering the Stuart period of our history. There was 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 year. Check out What's On and the website for details.



UKULELE

David Wild on 277 5881



Zoom ukulele kept the core group going during the pandemic, but now they are able to resume their Wednesday morning 11 am-12 noon slot in the small lounge at the Village Hall. The group has around 6 – 10 players on a regular basis, and now are playing occasional requests from the staff in the Parish Office! The group

already has 3 requests to play at different venues for Christmas.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS

Ursula Wild on 277 5881

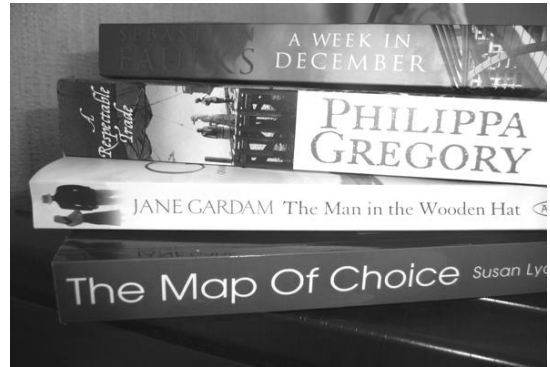
Around 7 people meet between 10 am and noon on the first and third Mondays of the month at a member's home (see What's On or ring for details). We would love a few more people to join us – so don't be frightened! Crosswords are provided, as are excellent refreshments.



LITERATURE

Helen Bull on 223 8329

We meet at Brook Court at 2 pm on the third Wednesday of the month to discuss what we have read during the preceding month. Our choice of book is determined 2 or 3 months ahead after discussion, and can include established authors, recommended books or 'top choices' from various websites or TV programmes. We are a very informal group, enjoying refreshments after our deliberations. Group leadership rotates every six months. A report on the discussions on each of our book choices is displayed on the website for six months. If you enjoy reading and would like to chat informally with a friendly group about your reading, then why not come along and join us. You would be very welcome!



CREATIVE WRITING

Mikki Wilde on 277 5509



We are now back into the swing of writing after the break for the pandemic. We have had some interesting themes, and remain amazed at the different interpretations on these themes which emerge when we read out our monthly offerings! Why not come along and join us – you do not have to be an author –

if you have an interest in the written word, and a willingness to share your writing with a friendly and supportive group.

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 a variety of dances; there is always help in getting the steps right!



SWANS

Pauline Woodward on 07936 555048

Easy walks from 10.30 am on the first and third Tuesday morning ending with a sociable time in a handy café.

Membership has dropped since the pandemic, and we would welcome new people on our gentle walks which include parks, city, canal towpaths and the like. Details are on the website or the printed What's On.



DISCUSSION

Trevor Boiling on 01455 371587



This has been an interesting 6 months since taking over the group from Liz Lockwood-Jones! I have tried to 'keep order' and provide a starting point or guide for subsequent discussions. We discuss a wide range of topics – ending each meeting by deciding on the topic for the next month. Sometimes we have to resort to a list gleaned from other **u3as**. Our discussions are not heavy, but kept light and mindful of our age profile. Each meeting concludes with the essential coffee and biscuits. We meet on the fourth Friday 10 - noon at Brook Court.

FIT FOR LIFE

Diana Lee on 277 9142

This class improves your fitness levels and enhances your sense of balance. We have a lovely instructor, Penny, who puts us through our paces to music, and in an age-appropriate way. However, we do need a few more members in order for it to continue, so why not join us in the Village



Hall each Monday (*not bank holidays*) between 11.30 am – 12.30 pm.

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
10 Jan	Masters of Mirth – the Sequel	Mike Storr
14 Feb	The Gretna Girls and the Devil's Porridge	David Skellern
14 Mar	The Work of a Celebrant	Gemma Rooke-Brownhills
11 Apr	My Life as a garden Designer	Karen Gimson
9 May	The Partitioning of India	Jackie Barker
13 June	AGM	

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 6330
Shadow Secretary:	Beryl Lishman	277 0405
Shadow Speaker Sec:	Janine Tibbles	07970 648979

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Our next Newsletter will be published in July 2023, 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 1 July 2023, please.

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