

Countesthorpe U3A Newsletter

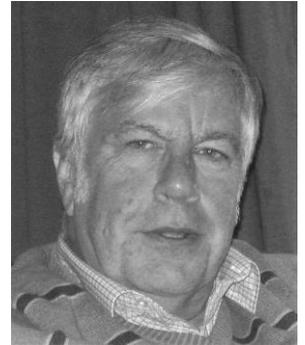
Dec 2016

Issue 2016/3

CHAIRPERSON'S LETTER

Hello Everyone

This is my second letter, the first appearing in our June Newsletter. I would like to thank all our members for the support I have received. Yet another year is coming to a close, but we will soon be looking forward to brighter, warmer days as spring makes another appearance.



Regrettably it is part of our human nature that we are more likely to grumble than to point out where things are going right. There was a comment during the year that we do not seem very academic in spite of our 'University' label. We took a serious look at this criticism and came to the conclusion that our view should be that we are learning and remaining active. Learning does not always take place in a stuffy academic sense but we decided that learning takes place in any group where the members know more than when they started. This is true, whether the group is Jazz Appreciation, Bridge or Carpet Bowls. The aims of our organisation are to 'Learn, laugh and live'. Let's make the most of all of these.

When the magazine 'Third Age Matters' changed from block mailing (sending us a large number of magazines to distribute) to individual mailing to our members we took the view that members should decide whether they receive the magazine or not. This is where human nature steps in! Some of us filled in the slip requesting a magazine and paid our annual fee for postage. The magazines appeared but ceased after a year. We failed (myself included) to note that the year had come to an end and a further postage cost was due. On the committee we decided that, as members of a national organisation, we should be aware of what is going on elsewhere in the country. From next year we will be getting magazines sent to the homes of all our full members. This also gives us a responsibility. What can we tell the rest of the country about what we are doing?

Here's hoping that all our members and readers have a very enjoyable and rewarding Christmas season and a superb New Year.

David Wild
Chairperson
(TEL: 277 5881)

Countesthorpe



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

CHANGES TO REGULAR GROUP MEETINGS OVER THE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR PERIOD

(This is probably not fully comprehensive, but includes all the information received up to copy date, so please check your individual groups!)

Fit for Life: No classes 19, 26 Dec and 2 Jan – resume as usual from 9 Jan
Pilates: No classes 20, 27 Dec and 3, 10 Jan – resume as usual from 17 Jan
Discussion: December meeting deferred to 30 Dec, at Jenny's (Hot News)
Walking (CARE) – No December Meeting
Solo Sunday Lunch – No December Meeting
Garden Appreciation – No December Meeting
Kurling – No meetings 28 Dec, nor 4 Jan (latter due to VH floor cleaning)
Jazz Appreciation – No December Meeting
Country Dancing – No meeting 26 December
Sign Language – No meeting 27 December

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

CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2016

This year, our lunch at Taste Restaurant at Leicester College on Thursday, 1 December was enjoyed by 103 people. We had an excellent meal in the happy company of U3A friends in the brilliant festive surroundings to kick-start our Christmas celebrations.

Prize Draw winners this year were:

1st £20 M&S giftcard: Liz Lockwood-Jones
2nd £15 M&S giftcard: Dave Whitehead
3rd £10 M&S giftcard: Maureen Shade

Our sincere thanks to all students and staff at Taste who gave us such an enjoyable start to our Christmas festivities.

The date for next year is: FRIDAY, 1ST DECEMBER 2017

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We've not celebrated Christmas yet, but as our Newsletter appears only in June and December, it is necessary to give all members notice in this issue that our next AGM will be held on Tuesday, 9 May at the start of our monthly meeting in the Village Hall, Countesthorpe, commencing at 2 pm.

A detailed agenda will be displayed on the screen over the stage, and will include the normal reports from the Chairman and Treasurer. We will also have the opportunity to see the financial reports of our U3A and to approve any amendments to the Constitution and/or annual subscription. For 2017, the subscription will be slightly increased to £13 for full members, and £7 for Associate Members (who must be full members of another U3A).

Minor changes to our Constitution have been discussed in Committee and sent to the Charities Commission, and the formal approval of the membership will be sought at the AGM. Amendments (underlined) include:

4.1 (i) The Committee shall consist of at least seven and not more than twelve members [excluding those who are co-opted] including the principal officers [Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and Information & Publicity Officer].

4.2 (iv) Officers shall serve for a period of three years and Committee members for a period of three years. Retiring officers may stand for re-election provided that no-one may hold the office of Chairman or Vice-Chairman for more than two consecutive terms of office without an intervening period of at least one year, except that a retiring Vice-Chairman may stand immediately for the post of Chairman.

5.1 (vi) Approving proposed amendments to annual subscriptions for members and associate members

This is also the time when we seek and elect new Committee members – so please consider if you could serve for three years. It is not onerous, and there is plenty of support available. We really do need 'new blood' on the committee as its members rotate, to ensure that our U3A remains vibrant, progressive and, above all, relevant to the needs of our constantly developing membership.

If you feel that you would like to be involved, then please speak to any Committee member, or look at our Constitution (which can be found in the Archive - Reference and General - section of our website).

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

Country Dancing

(Patsy Paterson on 277 6259)

A group of us meet on the second and fourth Monday afternoons of the month to enjoy a variety of English Dances and also, from time to time Scottish, Maypole, Longsword and Garland Dancing as well. The sessions run from 2 pm until 3.30 pm in Countesthorpe Village Hall, though we do not meet on bank holidays. Everyone is welcome to come and join us.

Sign Language

(Patsy Paterson on 277 6259)

A small group of members meet twice a month to try and converse by Signing instead of, or usually as well as, Speaking. Please get in touch if you are interested in joining our Tuesday mornings!

Allotment Gardening

(Glenys Catterall-Annal on 277 2495)

After a slow start, this has been a very productive year for the small group of five who manage the work of the allotment. However, it is time for us to take stock as two of our group are leaving the area, and two are beginning to notice the problems of ageing.

We have taken out a further year's rental but, unless we find replacement members, the group will fold and the equipment will have to be found new homes. Contact Glenys if you are interested in continuing the allotment. There is a need to be flexible, as the weather often affects the day and time for gardening!

CHEWS

(Ruth on 277 1533)

To call this a 'slimming group' is probably a misnomer! (*CHEWS = Controlled Healthy Eating With Support*) Our primary aim is to halt the seemingly inevitable march of age-related weight gain, and in this we are proving to be very successful! We are a group of decreasing size – that is the numbers attending, you understand, not necessarily our BMIs! If you would like to join us and get some support in controlling your own weight, then you would be very welcome! Just give me a call on the number above!

Kurling

(Ian Paterson on 277 6259)

There are gatherings for this adaptation of the game, which is played on ice as Curling, every Wednesday in Countesthorpe Village Hall between 11 am and 12 noon. £1 for a great hour's fun (or serious competition if you like), and a little light exercise as well!

History

(June Hawkins on 277 6330)

We've had a busy year, with outings to Flag Fen and Peterborough, Saffron Walden, Sapcote, two exhibitions at the British Museum, Hallaton and our 3-night break in the Ironbridge area. This latter included the excellent Museum of Carpet at Kidderminster, a ride on a steam train of the Severn Valley railway, visits to Much Wenlock, two ruined priories and Shipton Hall in addition to the museums in the Ironbridge Gorge itself. Not so much a holiday as a history 'boot camp' from which I think we all returned a little weary!

At our latest annual planning meeting (13 October 2016) we established the programme for the forthcoming year. This commences with talks on the Anglo-Saxons from Peter Liddle, whilst the weather is at its worst. Then our plans include visits to the GWR museum at Swindon (plus the nearby Designer Outlet and National Trust shop and restaurant!), Stoneywell (for the daffodils), Billesdon, Castle Acre, Hill Close Gardens and Warwick, Sapcote (part II), Wrest Park, the Portland Collection and Duxford Air Museum. Our 2017 short break will be to the Durham area, including a visit to Beamish Open Air Museum. Watch for details to secure your place (limit will be 49).

Many thanks to all who have contributed with ideas and help with organising our various events. Our events are open to all Countesthorpe U3A members, so why not try one or two this coming year – you'll be very welcome.

Solo Sunday Lunch

(Sheila Holmes on 277 2131)

The group continues apace with growing numbers – 34 on some occasions, so now we have to watch the numbers. Everyone seems to like the idea of going to Ullesthorpe Court each time – well, no-one has offered to take us elsewhere, in spite of a few 'blips' when dessert or coffee took rather a long time to appear! I think sometimes that catering establishments decide that because we are elderly we don't mind, or even that we have nowhere else to go; they don't know the U3A! However, in the main, most of us agree that the staff are agreeable and do their best. It is very nice to be able to have a half decent Sunday lunch once a month, in pleasant company with friendly service and acceptable surroundings. It beats sitting at home eating on your own, and there's no washing up! I like to think that the group is successful.

Creative Writing

(Mikki Wilde on 277 5509)

This continues to be a much loved group amongst its members. We write to a theme (a single word, or phrase) and never cease to be amazed at the sheer diversity of pieces which flow from this initial prompt each month!



We read our pieces out at the monthly meeting followed by a brief discussion, then distribute four copies amongst the four 'envelope' sub-groups so that the few people in each sub-group can read them at their leisure and write comments. The four copies then find their way back to their respective authors at the next meeting. Occasionally we might have a speaker, or try out some 'exercises' to stimulate our creative juices. But, we always have a good time (starting with refreshments!), so why not come and join us on the third Monday of the month at 2 pm in the residents' lounge at Brook Court?

Garden Appreciation

(Ruth Westley on 277 1533)

This relatively new group is growing well – as all successful gardens do! We have enjoyed a varied programme of outings and talks this year, and our planning meeting in November set out an interesting programme for 2017. We aim to link up with other U3A groups to ensure that outings are viable; for instance we are teaming up with the Travel and Literature Groups for a visit to Cambridge which will include the Botanical Gardens (and the Pepys Library), and linking with the History Group for a visit to Hill Close Gardens (historic allotments) and Warwick. We learn from experts and each other, and feel that we are “bloomin’ well” successful! Do come along and join us.

Theatre

(June Hawkins on 277 6330)

We have continued our policy of visiting both local and more distant venues and have enjoyed a range of productions this year. However, two have had to be cancelled due to low numbers, though this situation now seems to have improved with viable trips to see *Relatively Speaking*, *the Nutcracker*, *Season's Greetings* and *The Red Shoes* amongst the most recent or upcoming.

We aim to enjoy a production most months, though often take a break during the summer holidays as many theatres offer a reduced programme themselves, and members are often busy with gardens, holidays and grand-parenting.

Fit for Life

(Sheila Holmes on 277 2131)

The group is doing well most weeks, though sometimes attendance falls away due to holidays or grand-parenting duties! We have had to put up the cost to £4, but where else can you get an hour's exhaustion for so little! All the members are very friendly and the lovely Karen (our instructor) thinks we are all wonderful (or so she says) compared with the many other classes she takes, which is very nice to hear when you feel you might die before the hour is up! Come and join us. It really does do you good for one hour a week, at any rate!

Nordic Walking

(Barry Hillyard on 277 4187)

Take the weight off those hips and knees! No mud, no stiles, and no cost either – what could be better? If you can gently swing your arms when you walk, then you can 'do' Nordic walking. We have poles to lend out, so what are you waiting for? Join the 'tenacious few' who are keeping this group alive. Meet up at 9.30 am on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month, and join us for about an hour's pleasant and relaxing exercise.

Discussion

(Liz Lockwood-Jones on 240 2296)

The only conclusion this group has reached is that we should give up trying to do so, and just enjoy the conversation (and the refreshments)! With between ten and seventeen attending, it is always a lively discussion, and we have tackled some wide ranging topics, or sometimes just reverted to 'Hot News' allowing us to pick up on some of the most current themes of the day. You'd be most welcome to join us – just come along, or call for more information.

Travel

(Jill Clayton on 277 7154)

Trips since the last Newsletter include a day at Uttoxeter Races, Ely, Eltham Palace and London. The Planning and Social Evening Meeting proved very popular, and a range of interesting trips are planned for the coming year. We will be spending a day each in Birmingham and Worcester, making a visit to the Morgan Factory near Malvern and enjoying a Gin and Whisky tour in the Cotswolds. Stately homes on offer include Rockingham Castle, Blenheim Palace and Dudmaston Hall. There is also a combined outing (with the Garden Appreciation Group) to Cambridge – to see the Botanical Gardens and the Pepys Museum. Also planned is a short break to the Manchester Ship Canal and Liverpool from 1-5 May (Monday - Friday) from £339 per person sharing a twin room.

For the latest information, see What's On or the website, and book early with Jill to avoid disappointment!

The Settlers of Catan

(Ralph Hunt on 277 8562)

Given that "The Settlers of Catan" was virtually unknown in Countesthorpe this small group, which aims to play and explore the game's many delights, has started quite well.

Currently running two sessions a month, its eight members have mastered the basic concepts and are now beginning to discover some simple expansions. The photograph here shows "Fishermen of Catan" in progress.

For those of you who have not heard of it yet "The Settlers of Catan" is a dynamic strategy board game from that stable known as "European" games. This particular one was invented (in his cellar) by a German dentist, Klaus Teuber, who took inspiration from the historical and cultural development of Iceland. Klaus and his son, Dan, continue to refine and expand the game, their latest incarnation being "Catan: Ancient Egypt".

The basic concept for "Settlers" is simple. Players settle on the (fictitious) island of Catan and work the land to produce resources - wood from its forests, ore from its mountains, grain from its fields, brick from its hills, and wool from the sheep in its pastures. Using these resources players build roads, settlements, and cities, gaining points as they do so. The winner is the first player to reach 10 points.



Easy? Well, there is some luck involved too, and we learn as we go.

Game sessions are on the first Wednesday evening of each month (7 – 9 pm) and on Monday mornings by arrangement (10 am - noon).

If your appetite is whetted and you would like to play, please contact Ralph Hunt - tel: 0116 277 8562, mobile: 07071 834394, or email: ralphjohunt@hotmail.co.uk

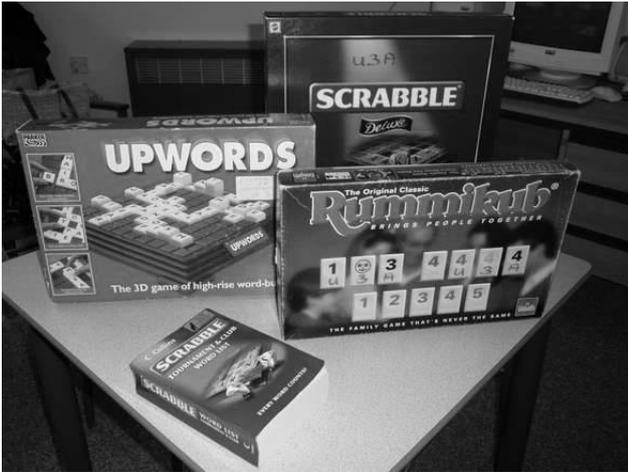
Guitar

(David Wild on 377 5881)

Our group of keen guitar players has been going for a few years now. We are never going to win any awards for musical ability, but sheer doggedness keeps us going with between 4 and 8 musicians each week. If anyone is keen to put in some serious practice time, we will be happy to steer them in the right direction if they bring along their instrument on a Monday morning.

Scrabble

(Lesley Woodward on 278 7972)



This year the group has welcomed several new members, including Andrew, Andy and Ralph, so we must be doing something right! Anyone who would like to learn/play Rummikub or Upwords will also be made welcome - not everyone in the group plays Scrabble! I will be standing down as Group Leader in the New Year but am confident that the group will continue to be successful with a new leader.

Beginners' Photography

(Barry Hillyard on 277 4187)

This met during the early part of the year but will recommence if any members of our U3A wish to have short course in the basics of photography. Perhaps you get a new camera for Christmas, or are taking up the hobby in retirement after many years as a "happy snapper", and want to know more about what you are doing. We meet in Barry's house when four or five [people want to do the course. Contact Barry (tel above) or barry@bhillyard.plus.com) if you are interested.

Computing

(Barry Hillyard on 277 4187)

This ad hoc group has met on many of the first Mondays in the month this year. We look at problems members have, either with the hardware or the applications they want to use. It is very much a case of what the people attending want to look at – no set plan over a period of time.

If anyone wants a more sustained course I would advertise it and see if two to five people would like it. We meet in Barry's house when four or five [people want to do the course. Contact Barry (tel above) or barry@bhillyard.plus.com) if you are interested in coming with a problem (or problems) or a short course.

Carpet Bowls

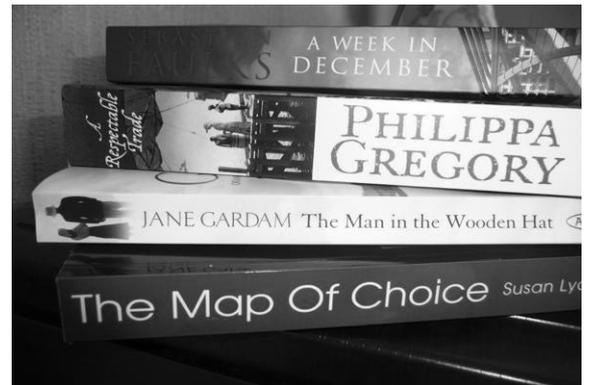
(Barry Hillyard on 277 4187)

Up to 20 of us meet in the Scout Hut (by Dine India) every Wednesday afternoon between 2 and 4 pm. We have 2 carpets and use both once the number on the afternoon exceeds 14. Some of us started 9 years ago as total beginners at bowls, others use it to keep their hand in when the outdoor season is finished for the year. In addition to the bowling there is a good deal of chatter and gossip and a half time tea/coffee break. If you fancy joining us, just turn up and have a go. We pay £1.50 a week to cover the hire of the hall.

Literature

(Group leadership rotates)

We meet on the third Wednesday from 2 pm until about 3.30 pm (depending on the length of our deliberations) in the residents' lounge at Brook Court. Each month we select a book to discuss at the following meeting. A summary of our discussions is then put up on the website (under the Literature Group pages), and is read out at the start of the next meeting. Sometimes we choose a specific title, at other times it might be any book by a given author, or even a genre. For instance, for December, we will all have read an autobiography and will give a short summary to the group of what we've read and what we think of it. We have some fascinating discussions, and always end up with a cup of tea/coffee and a biscuit. It's not a 'heavy' or serious book club, so why not come along and see if you would like to join us. If you like reading, this could be for you in 2017!



Pilates

(Ursula Wild on 277 5881)

The group continues its popularity, and is helping about 12 or 14 members to retain their balance, mobility and core strength. Our instructor, Karen, tailors each exercise to the needs and capabilities of individuals and so if you have not tried Pilates before, you need not be afraid to come along and give it a try. Mats, and equipment such as stretch bands and balls are all provided. For just £5 for a single session, or £20 in advance for 5 sessions, this is a good way to maintain suppleness and strength, so why not try it?

Art

(Maureen Thacker on 278 1877)

This group meets each Thursday at 2 – 4 pm in the Methodist Chapel. We do not have any instruction, but work in a variety of media and help each other. In the summer we often make a visit to Patchings.

KEEPING EVERYBODY INFORMED!

Our next Newsletter will be published in June 2017, and news from the Groups will be much appreciated, or special short articles about holidays or trips, etc.

Copy deadline is Thursday, 1 June, 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*

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!

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 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 so that this is 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
13 Dec	Victorian Entertainment	Brandy Wine Lodge
10 Jan	Behind the Scenes at Chelsea Flower Show	Geoffrey Smith
14 Feb	The River Ranger	Adrian Lane
14 Mar	The History of Leicester Cinemas	Brian Johnson
11 Apr	The Work of the Samaritans	TBA
9 May	AGM	

YOUR U3A COMMITTEE 2016-7

Chairman:	David Wild	277 5881
Deputy Chair:	Peter Bradbury	01455 274604
Secretary:	Christine Claricoates	277 5251
Treasurer:	Sue Wyllie	284 9959
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:	Graham Cox	284 8949

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.

www.countesthorpeu3a.co.uk

**You're sure to find something of interest from our three dozen groups!
Make 2017 the year that YOU do something different through your U3A.**