

Countesthorpe U3A Newsletter

June - November 2019

Issue 1

CHAIRPERSON'S LETTER

Hello Everyone

Just in case you're feeling your age, take heart. A 100-year-old German woman has decided to go into politics and is now standing for councillor in her local town. So, there's no excuse for not doing some of those things that you've always thought worth doing, is there? Like joining the Pilates or Ukulele group!



Our U3A membership continues to grow and we can be very proud of the range of activities on offer, thanks to the work put in by our Group Leaders. The newly constituted committee will soon be fully operational and looking forward to the coming year. I would like to thank those members who have left the committee for their sterling work for our U3A, and extend a warm welcome to the newcomers.

At the time of writing, we are still embroiled in the Brexit debacle and, who knows, we might still be embroiled this time next year! It has certainly provided much food for thought regarding the nature of our country's governance and our place on the world stage.

Furthermore, it seems that hallowed English values are crumbling all around us following a recent revelation that women Morris dancers are to be allowed to dance with men! A spokesman who objected to this development to the dancers' governing body, stated that, "Women are a different physical shape to men; their centre of gravity is in a different place." I reckon a strategic withdrawal from further comment is necessary here.

'Summer is a-coming in' and, hopefully, will bring lovely weather with it for us all to enjoy. While some groups might take a break in July and August, do think about joining a new group, or even starting a new one, to ensure that our U3A continues to thrive.

With very best wishes to all our members

Peter Bradbury
Chairperson

(TEL 01455 273604)

SIMPLE STEPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF, YOUR INFORMATION AND YOUR MONEY

Advice provided by the Cyber Protect Team, Leicestershire Police

Keep up to date!

Whatever devices, operating systems, software or apps you use, always ensure you are running the most up to date versions. Updates include security patches to fix vulnerabilities! If you can, select 'Auto Update'.

Antivirus

Make sure you have up to date antivirus installed and running for all devices you use to access the internet and email – make sure you are always running the most up to date. If you can, select 'Auto Update'.

Passwords

You need to have a different password for everything you log in to. Make sure you're using #ThreeRandomWords to create a strong, separate password for each account.

iTunes /Gift Card Scams

NO legitimate debt can be paid in iTunes vouchers or Gift Cards - #HangUp on that call

Courier Fraud

Neither the Police nor Banks will ever contact you to:

- transfer money to a safe account;
- withdraw funds for safekeeping;
- assist with an undercover investigation, OR
- collect cash, bank cards or PIN numbers

ALWAYS #TakeFive and REMEMBER! – emails, texts and phone calls can all easily be spoofed. Don't automatically assume any contact is genuine until you have verified that it is.

Did you know that you can forward suspected phishing emails to NFIBPhishing@city-of-london.pnn.police.uk

Want to know more? VISIT GetSafeOnline!

www.getsafeonline.org/Leicestershire is the key site to signpost people to for advice both individuals and businesses.

Reporting Cyber Crime and Fraud

Underreporting of incidents is still very high. Please report all incidents via Action Fraud – www.actionfraud.police.uk and 0300 123 2040.

Beware Free WiFi!

Fine for maps, bus timetables, weather etc – but do not risk sensitive information, such as being on social media, checking emails, banking, shopping etc – use your 3G or 4G on your phone.

CHOOSING ANTIVIRUS, Virtual Private Network Apps (VPN) ETC

- Read reviews from other users – just as you would when researching restaurants or holidays!
- Search for articles on best products
- Note the number of downloads and reviews left before downloading any apps or software (if not many, AVOID!)
- What score do other users give it?

CHECKLIST

- Check Operating Systems are supported and running the latest version (Windows 7 & above!) If you are still using Windows Vista or XP, you **must upgrade as a matter of urgency!**
- Check Firewalls, Antivirus, Antimalware and Antispyware installed up to date and running
- Check your passwords are secure enough and not used across platforms
- Check your digital footprint
- Check UK Phonebook & 192.com for entries in your name – request removal
- Check your social media settings
- Check your email address with www.haveibeenpwned.com
- Ensure your home router has a password set, if the original default, change it
- Don't use public WiFi for sensitive transactions such as banking/social media/email unless you're using a VPN (Virtual Private Network). Alternatively, revert to 3G/4G on your device

Sign up to www.neighbourhoodlink.co.uk to receive cyber advice, fraud and scam warnings, and information on your local Beat Area – this is a free service!

*Please do share this information with family, friends, and neighbours!
For more advice follow @LeicsCyberAware on Twitter!*

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO AGM, 14 MAY 2019

The last 12 months seems to have flown by, and I cannot believe that it has been two years since I became your Chairman. Since our last AGM I have enjoyed so many wonderful day trips out to places of interest covering history, the arts, science and technology together with a short holiday to Llangollen. A European cruise was also greatly enjoyed by those who took part, and another holiday in Bournemouth is already planned for October. The Outings and Holiday teams are doing a splendid job for us all.

A recent day visit to Birmingham sticks in the mind. It was billed as a mystery tour. Apart from seeing some wonderful stained glass in the cathedral in the morning, and enjoying a pub lunch and a chat in a nearby hostelry, the afternoon provided a visit to a factory museum which, in days gone by, had produced embellishments for coffins together with the manufacture of shrouds. The shroud fabrics were so fine, and the garments so well made. I felt it was a shame that these would always be hidden. An argument for a glass coffin perhaps? How successful these would be I don't know . . . remains to be seen?!

In all we have over forty activity groups and most continue to be buoyant. The ukulele group, one of the latest to be formed, continues to thrive with more new members joining as we speak. I must pay tribute to all those who put themselves out to lead activity groups for the benefit and enjoyment of us all.

I want to formally record, on behalf of our 450 members, my sincere thanks to my fellow committee members for their invaluable contributions and support to me. I have already mentioned the splendid outings and holiday teams of Jill, Isobel and Teresa.

But we have several members stepping down from the committee, and I want to take this opportunity formally to record our thanks. To David Wild for his years of sterling service as a former chairman and membership secretary; to Helen Bull for her great work as speaker secretary and to Christine Claricoates for grappling with the role of secretary; and finally to Joan Berry for her contributions both in meetings and in policy formulation.

But particular thanks, and recognition, must be given to three people. To Sue Wyllie who, in our hour of need, stepped in to take on the treasurer's role again; and to Barry Hillyard and to June Hawkins. Most people will have no idea how much Sue, Barry and June do for our

U3A. Thankfully, they will be remaining on the committee undertaking key roles next year.

The next few months will see a new, exciting initiative being introduced. You will appreciate that we have required all members to complete a new membership form. This data is in preparation for the computerisation of our current membership system which will bring many benefits once it is fully established. Details of the new system (called Beacon) can be found in our forthcoming Newsletter and in the latest edition of U3A's magazine *Third Age Matters*.

Finally, I hope that all our members take full advantage of what our vibrant U3A has to offer as this will ensure its continuing success in the years to come.

My best wishes to you all.

Peter Bradbury, Chairman



HELP!

Before each monthly meeting, a small army of people scurry about getting everything ready, setting up tables, putting up displays, distributing papers onto seats, setting out the books, DVDs and jigsaws, as well as organising the sound and visual technicalities. But, one of the main jobs involves setting out all the chairs in the main hall – and of course, putting them away again afterwards. We have tried a number of ideas to find help with this, but as it stands, it remains down to willing helpers from amongst the members.

If anybody is either willing to come at 1 pm to help with this, or knows of any able-bodied soul who might be willing to do this for a small sum of money on a regular basis, then please contact any member of the committee, or email via the website. We obviously appreciate that not everyone is able to move chairs, but we think that there are a number of our members who *could* help out like this, and we would love to hear from you. Thanks!

BOOKS, DVDS and JIGSAWS GALORE!

Did you know that there are two tables at the front at each of our monthly meetings which are groaning with books and DVDs? All are available for members freely to take and enjoy. Then, either bring them back, send to a charity shop, or pass on to a friend. If you have unwanted books (*but paperbacks ONLY, please*) or any (*working!*) DVDs to donate to the table, that would be much appreciated.

Jigsaws are also available, BUT on a **LOAN** basis! These are not the property of the U3A, but are made available for the use of members thanks to Jennifer and Andrew Yates. So, when you have finished enjoying them, please don't forget to return them for others to borrow in the future.



CLARIFICATION OF 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 following 31 March. So, even if somebody joins, say, in November or January, they will still pay the full annual fee (it's currently 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, eg: capitation to the Third Age Trust.

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

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

A MYSTERY NO MORE!

At the end of February, a coach-load of trusting U3A members embarked on a History Mystery outing. It was billed as follows: "*A visit to a church that became a cathedral in a town which became a city. Lunch with a bard, followed by a visit to a museum which gives a glimpse of our future.*"

Only the organiser and the coach driver were 'in' on the details. Due to space restrictions at the two venues, the group was to be split into two smaller groups of 15, meeting up for lunch. A cryptic note was handed to each passenger, saying which of the two groups they were in for the day and when they needed to be at a specific point to rejoin the coach - and that was it!

A smooth ride into Birmingham followed, with half the group being dropped off at the Cathedral – formerly a parish church before Birmingham became a city. Refreshments and a guided tour followed, with the group then being collected to be taken to 'lunch with a bard' – at the Shakespeare pub, off Summer Row. There they met up with the other half of the party over some excellent food, before swapping venues.

The '*museum offering a glimpse of the future*' turned out to be the nearby Coffin Works! (*Yes, we'll all end up in one sometime!*) This award-winning museum offered a warm welcome and a fascinating insight into the way things used to be – from the beautiful fittings and metal work, to the shrouds! Everyone seemed to appreciate the joke, luckily!

The day worked out as planned, fortunately, thanks to our very long-suffering coach driver, Mick, who skilfully and patiently negotiated the maze of narrow streets and city traffic.

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 and/or medical details for use in the unlikely event of an emergency.

MEET THE COMMITTEE FOR 2019-20

PETER BRADBURY (Chairperson) was born in Leicester and moved to Countesthorpe in 1968 with his wife Winifred. In 1978 the family moved to Sapcote, though an affinity with Countesthorpe has always remained. After teaching in Wigston schools for 36 years, Peter fully retired from his management and consultancy posts in 2007. He enjoys spending as much time as possible with family and especially his 9 grandchildren. Peter joined the U3A in 2010 and participates in handbells, art, history, bird-watching, outings groups. He enjoys DIY, reading, classical music and history, and voluntary work within Sapcote.



JANINE TIBBLES (Secretary) was born in Essex and moved to Leicestershire in 1989, firstly to Croft and then to Thurlaston, with her husband Dave in 1994, where they had two sons, Harry and Charlie. After teaching in Cosby for 25 years, Janine retired in 2014 and worked as a Community Carer for a short time and an Examinations Invigilator at De Montfort University for three years. Her interests include reading, travelling, socialising with friends and volunteering for Age UK. Janine joined Countesthorpe U3A in 2018 and enjoys the monthly meetings, Fit For Life, Discussion and Literature groups, and loves the varied U3A day trips.



JUNE HAWKINS (Publicity and Information) lived in Countesthorpe for almost 40 years before moving to Blaby in 2017. She has been a U3A member since 2004. Since retirement from her senior management post in 2008 and also running a small business, she now enjoys U3A Holidays, Nordic Walking, SWANS, Ukulele, Outings, Creative Writing, Literature and Discussion, and is Group Leader for Theatre and History. She maintains the website and produces the What's On, Newsletter, activity group leaflets plus the monthly slide presentation. June is also involved in the Beacon U3A management system. She edits the 'Creative Writing Miscellanies' and volunteers at two foodbanks and Countesthorpe library.



SUSAN WYLLIE (Treasurer) is a qualified Chartered Accountant and continues in her role as Treasurer, after retiring from her professional role as an auditor. She joined the U3A in 2004 and is involved with the Hand-bells, Theatre and Outings groups, enjoys taking occasional walks with the SWANS and CARE walking groups, as well as organising the Luncheon Club. She also acts as Treasurer for several other charities, and enjoys crown green bowls, mosaic work and travel.



BARRY HILLYARD (Membership Secretary) has been a member since 2006, a year before his retirement from teaching mathematics and IT. Married to Pat, he has lived in Countesthorpe for 40 years, and has been involved with the Methodist Church and the Scouts. His hobbies include computers and photography. He runs the U3A Carpet Bowls, Computer, Nordic Walking and Beginners' Photography groups, and participates in Photography, History, Walking, Holidays and Outings. He also leads on the Beacon U3A management system.



JENNY MILLS (Groups Co-ordinator) has been a member since 2001 and has previously served on the committee. Born in Blaby, she lived in Countesthorpe for 40 years before her recent move back to Blaby. After retiring from her post as Lecturer at South Wigston College she ran our U3A Travel group very successfully for more than 12 years – introducing short breaks and the much-loved holidays to Wengen in addition to the outings. She now enjoys Discussion, Bridge, Handbell Ringing, History, Theatre, Holidays and Outings groups.



TERESA MORGAN (Deputy Chairperson and Technical Officer) moved to Countesthorpe in 2017, to be closer to her son and help with childcare, having purchased Jenny Mills' former home. It was Jenny who introduced her to the joys of the U3A. She joined the Creative Writing Group and now leads a Craft Circle. Teresa has had a varied background including as an hotelier, health and beauty studio proprietor, and tutor of porcelain doll-making both in her own studio and several colleges around Leicester. She has also judged doll competitions in Europe and the USA. She loves reading, theatre and a variety of different crafts and is always open to new experiences.



BERYL LISHMAN has lived in Countesthorpe for over 25 years. She has two, now grown-up, girls who attended the local schools and college and is a retired primary school teacher who joined the U3A in 2014 when working part-time. She attends the Literature group, and the Tuesday meetings when possible and has been on several theatre trips. Apart from the U3A, she sings in the South Wigston Sing4fun choir and is a member of the Leicester Footpaths Association, as well as spending one day a week caring for her latest grand-daughter. She has welcomed the chance for more U3A involvement by serving on the committee.



PAULA WOLLASTON (Speaker Secretary) and husband, Len, have lived in Countesthorpe for 25 years. They have family in Norfolk and Whetstone, with grand-daughters at Leicester University and a local school, plus a grandson who is a rock guitarist. Since retiring from her post with the Home Office 15 years ago Paula has enjoyed volunteering with De Montfort Hall Publicity Department and the A&E Department of the LRI, and is currently secretary and helper at the Senior Citizens' Luncheon Club in the village. Her interests include travel, historical houses and gardens, theatre, cookery and dining out. She is also responsible for organising the refreshments at monthly meetings.



ISOBEL McDONALD was born in Liverpool and left there at 17½ to join the WRAF, serving 5 years before leaving to have her children. She lived in Broughton Astley from 1972, and later moved to Littlethorpe with her second husband, downsizing in order to buy a boat. They enjoyed 6 summers exploring European waterways before changing to a motorhome and travelling in France, Spain and Portugal. Since being widowed, Isobel now enjoys many U3A activities including Line Dancing, SWANS, Country Dancing and Discussion, and organises the Outings and Ukulele groups.



DUSTY DURHAM has lived in Countesthorpe for 18 years and is a relatively new member of the U3A since retiring from his work in financial services. He has three adult children and five grandchildren. He is a member of the U3A Ukulele group. His other interests include sailing, and playing the guitar.



JILL CLAYTON (co-opted member) and husband, John, have lived in Countesthorpe for 10 years; feeling encouraged to do so through enjoyment of their U3A membership when seeking to relocate from Braunstone Town. Jill has always actively volunteered in the community, having been a Youth Club Leader and a Town Councillor (also being appointed Town Mayor) as well as 33 years with a national listening charity. She now works with Community Harvest Whetstone and the local foodbank and is also an active member of St Andrew's Church. Jill organises the U3A Holidays group, and her greatest interests are family, travel, bridge, theatre and keeping fit.



SOMETHING REALLY IMPORTANT IS MISSING!

Can YOU help?

Do you know somebody who might help?

Currently we have nobody to take over as Treasurer from Sue Wyllie who plans to be leaving the role next May. It is really important that we get somebody onto the committee to shadow Sue during this year so that there is a smooth and efficient hand-over of this vital role.

Without a Treasurer, there is NO U3A

We have said this before, and make no apologies for repeating it! The role is absolutely essential to our survival as an organisation. Please come and talk to Sue or Peter, or indeed any committee member, if you feel you may have the skills to undertake this role. There is a lot of support available, and we will shortly be implementing computerised systems to link in with membership data – all of which will simplify the job.

Any member willing to shadow the Treasurer, with the intention of taking over the role from June 2020 would be co-opted onto the committee immediately.

The committee meets once a month, on the Friday before the general meeting (which is always on the second Tuesday). The meeting is usually 10 am – 11.30 am. Attendance at the monthly general meetings is quite important, though we recognise that no-one is likely to be able to attend ALL of these meetings due to holidays and other commitments!

WHAT'S "BEACON" ALL ABOUT?

You may have heard committee members mentioning something called 'Beacon'. This is a computer-based system which helps U3As operate their essential functions, such as membership, finance, communication, etc. It was originally devised by a group of enthusiasts, since which time it has been continually developed and refined, and has now been adopted by the Third Age Trust. TAT provides support for any U3A wishing to adopt the system, and helps considerably with the initial setting-up and migration of existing membership data.

Your U3A has been working to establish this system to ensure the efficient and effective operation of all its essential functions, beginning with membership. This, along with the Data Protection regulations, was the reason for asking you all to complete a new, full membership application form. All the data we hold about members has now been checked and loaded onto the system.



In the fullness of time, we will expand into using it for our accounting functions, and then hopefully to provide an 'online payment and renewal' system for membership. Also we will be able to offer a simple system to enable Group Leaders to communicate easily with their group members. All that is for the future, though, and we will keep you posted on developments as they happen.

The key Administrator is Barry Hillyard, with June Hawkins as deputy. Other officers of the committee will also have access to relevant parts of the system according to their individual roles and responsibilities, and eventually any Group Leaders who wish to do so will also have access on a read-only basis.

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

KURLING

Ian Paterson on 277 6259

Why not try something 'OLD'? Curling has been played since the age of the cave/person. When the sheet of ice moved away from Countesthorpe we took up NEW Age Kurling. With no ice to play on, instead we used the village hall floor and some castors.

A very exciting game, sometimes a team game, dependent on how many players turn up, sometimes individual. Scoring is simple, nearest the middle scores ten, others less than ten! It's up to you to knock your opponent off the centre spot.

As a game it can be very competitive or just good fun - it's entirely up to the players taking part. For those not as supple as they once were there are 'pushers' to save bending. Everyone welcome, takes two minutes to learn and a lifetime to master! 11 o'clock on Wednesdays in Countesthorpe village hall, rain, hail or ice sheets! Just turn up.

COUNTRY DANCING

Patsy Paterson on 277 6259

Our bi-monthly gatherings on a Monday afternoon regularly involve about 20 of us dancing a range of traditional and modern English Country Dances, Maypole Dancing, occasional Morris dances, International Dance, and even Sword Dances on occasion! Hopefully we have fun and exercise for the body and the brain. Everyone is welcome - please wear comfortable shoes and clothes.



ART

Pamela Whitehead on 277 8855

Successful collages were made by a few members after collecting blue and green items from magazines etc. We enjoyed the new challenge! We now have an ex-college art teacher who has joined our merry group, and who gives us extra help when needed. Our new subscription is £3 per week, which includes tea/ coffee and biscuits. New members are always welcomed.

BIRDWATCHING

Janet Easey on 277 2544

The Birdwatching Group has had an enjoyable six months with a stable membership of 20-24. We have continued to make trips out with especially interesting ones to Rushden Lakes in February and Welney in March. In the next few months we are off to Brandon Marsh and Narborough Bog, where we will hope to add to our sightings of uncommon birds.

HOLIDAYS

Jill Clayton on 277 7154

Our last UK holiday to Bembridge on the Isle of Wight attracted 42 members, and as reported in a previous Newsletter, we had a great time seeing the local sights and enjoying the excellent food and facilities at Warner's. As a complete contrast, the European cruise took place last October – again, a full report in the last Newsletter. Thirteen passengers took part and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Guernsey proved popular and became fully booked very soon after it was advertised. A report on this will be in the next Newsletter. This October, we have a four-night break, on half board basis, at the Riviera Hotel, Bournemouth for just £309 per person inclusive of gratuities and luggage handling. Book quickly before all the rooms are taken!

Our last day outings as the Travel Group, before we split into Holidays and Outings, were a trip in July for 44 people to Windsor Castle and Savill Gardens, then Kedleston Hall in September with 28 people. Our final day trip was in November to Chatsworth House for the Christmas Market, which was enjoyed by 49 passengers.

GARDEN APPRECIATION

Ruth Westley on 277 1533

The group has had a good New Year. The January meeting was at Palmer's in Enderby where we were introduced to the possibilities and care of many varieties of climbing plants. The complimentary coffee was much appreciated too. In February Pat Beeson told us about the history and development of the Yellow Book. She illustrated her talk with slides and encouraged us to visit the open gardens in our area. We were all given a booklet listing the local gardens, prices and times. A sunny day in March found us at Dorothy Clive's garden. It is situated in and around old quarry workings. The varied areas have different planting schemes reflecting the position and terrain. We all thought it beautifully kept and the cafe was a delight. In April we went to hear Bel Grierson at Miles Nursery. Bel gave a talk to our U3A last year

about her horticultural life. Later the same day we went to Gates Garden Centre for lunch and a wander round. Felley Priory beckoned in May. It is our group's second visit and this will be at a different time of year. It is a jewel of a garden and we enjoyed spending an afternoon in its delights with some refreshment in the café of course.

FIT FOR LIFE

Diana Lee on 277 9142

Come and join our group which meets regularly each Monday morning (except Bank Holidays) at Countesthorpe Village Hall between 11.30 am and 12.30 pm. Debbie Cooper leads us in lively, though not strenuous, aerobic activity, suitable for our age range. It's healthy and fun to maintain fitness, strength and mobility. We also do stretching and weight-based exercises (often seated). We wear comfy clothes (Lycra not compulsory!). All this for just £4 per session, payable when you attend. See you there?

DISCUSSION

Liz Lockwood-Jones on 240 2296

Our discussions are always interesting and wide-ranging, though we seldom reach a conclusion – even when we take a vote at the end! But we do have a laugh along the way, and get to appreciate other perspectives on topics of the day, with a coffee and nibbles at the end. We are sometimes stumped for a topic, so have taken to dipping into a collection of themes used by other U3As. Recent topics have included “Should ISIS Brides be Allowed to Return to the UK?”; “Is the Cost of the Olympics Becoming Prohibitive?”; “Internet – Blessing or Curse?” and “Should Jurors be Trained?” Why not join us for “When do Pets Become Pests?” on 28 June between 10 am and noon at Mulberry Court, Blaby.

SWANS (Short Walks And No Stiles)

Pauline Woodward on 07936 555048

Each of our walks attracts between 12 and 20 people. We wander the many attractive bye-ways and canal towpaths, lanes and parks around our locality, covering about 2 or 2.5 miles. We have a few walks a little further afield, which include Bradgate Park, Burbage Common and two in Market Harborough. We try to vary the time of year when we visit, so that we see our surroundings in different seasons, though always with an eye to whether or not we will encounter mud (which we don't like!) Our walks are on the first and third Tuesdays and start from various points at 10.30 am, and usually end up in a coffee shop! Details always appear in What's On and on the website. New walkers welcomed.

SOLO SUNDAY LUNCH

Sheila Holmes on 277 2131

We are still plodding along with a few ups and downs over the last six months when we eventually decided that we would try a different venue. However, this did not really meet our criteria and, after a vote, the ladies mostly thought that it was a case of “better the devil you know” and Ullesthorpe Court was given a second chance. This seemed to be working until the March lunch, which was DIRE, with very slow service, cold food and on-one seemed to know what they were doing to the extent that two diners at another table got up and left, leaving their cold lunch on the table. We complained *en masse*, with the result that we got a 50% reduction on the meals, free coffee and an apology of sorts, which was all fair enough. However, it was decided that two of the members would start researching a different venue. Meanwhile, we decided to wait to see what the reception would be like in April; subsequently we remain at Ullesthorpe Court!

OUTINGS

Isobel McDonald on 367 8314

39 of us went to Shrewsbury on 4th April. Unfortunately, the weather could have been much better as we had hail and rain for most of the day. There was even snow on the hill tops.

We had a river cruise booked and what should have been an enjoyable cruise was spoilt by several people being rather cold and rain coming in through the fold down windows that are rolled up in the summer for a better view! We were given a welcome cup of tea or coffee and biscuits on the boat; just what we needed after our coach journey.

Once off the boat, I think most people found somewhere to have some lunch and do some retail therapy. It was not the weather to go and see the castle or other historic sights let alone the wonderful park and gardens. It was agreed that we must go back on a warmer and drier day so the Shrewsbury can be explored properly. On the whole, people made the best of it as the weather is beyond our control and it was just the wrong day in that week for the weather.

Forthcoming events include a trip to the Severn Trent Food Waste Treatment centre in Spondon, a visit to Halfpenny Green Vineyards (*guess the activity here!*), and a Medieval Banquet at Coombe Abbey.

Full details are on the monthly What's On or the website, or visit the Outings desk in the small lounge at monthly meetings to book your seat and enjoy a great outing in good company!

PHOTOGRAPHY

John Thacker on 278 1877

The group meets in the Methodist Church on the third Thursday of the month, from 6.30 – 8.00 pm.

Various projects and activities are enjoyed by a small band of photography enthusiasts.

A recent visit to the Triumph Motorcycle Factory proved a big hit! New members are always welcomed.



HISTORY

June Hawkins on 277 6330

Our programme this year is a little changed from the Planning Meeting, due to a variety of circumstances. We are still going to the Black Country Museum, but the planned outing to David Austin Roses has now become a visit to Dudmaston Hall. We are unable to visit either Burghley House or Grimsthorpe Castle, so hope to carry those plans forward to next year. Instead, we are making a visit to the local museum at Lutterworth which features Sir Frank Whittle's work, and adding an outing to Doddington Hall, near Lincoln. Our usual September break is also a non-event this year, as the only suitable hotels were either to be closed for refurbishment or were fully booked. Hopefully, our new plans will turn out to be as good as those we have already enjoyed, and also hope that next year runs a little more to plan! Thanks to all those who have organised and led outings this year.

THEATRE

June Hawkins on 277 6330

"The Girl on the Train" based on the recent bestselling book proved to be a first-class production at Milton Keynes theatre, and many of us enjoyed it more than the book! "Funny Girl" at Concordia was up to the usual high standard of performance, with wonderful staging and costumes. "Lloyd George Knew My Father" provided a very funny evening at Market Harborough. At the time of writing we have just been thrilled by Matthew Bourne's latest production: "Romeo and Juliet" at Curve. This will be followed by another visit to Market Harborough for "Losing the Plot" – a situation in which many of us find ourselves from time to time! War Horse returns on 2 October, with West Side Story in time for Christmas! Then, it's more Matthew Bourne to start the New Year later in January 2020 with Red Shoes! Why not join us and enjoy a great theatre performance, with almost door to door transport, good seats, good company and support for local theatre productions! Book early, as seats sell out quickly.

UKULELE

Isobel McDonald on 367 8314

We have about 11 members now who are increasing their knowledge of chords. Some are finding it easier than others when a new chord is introduced, but then on reflection we realise that the chords we started with and found difficult are now quite easy, so we have learned something after all. We have a laugh, that is the main thing and don't take ourselves too seriously. It is not too late to join us if you would like to learn to play. Complete beginners are always welcome and from April we have been concentrating on easy songs in the first half to help the beginners and the second half doing more advanced songs for the more experienced players to improve. If beginners want to stay and join in they can of course, likewise the more experienced can come a bit later if they don't want to do easier songs. Doing one thing with the left hand, something different with the right hand, all at the same time as singing is very good for the brain – or so they say!

CREATIVE WRITING

Mikki Wilde on 277 5509

Our group has a couple of newish members to bring a fresh perspective to our writings. Each month we write to a theme, which varies from a single word to a short phrase which might be the opening line of whatever we write. Although the theme or phrase is the same, we amaze ourselves at the wide variation in responses these elicit. Occasionally we undertake a short writing exercise to stimulate the writing juices. But we always have a most enjoyable time – why not come and join us. You do not have to have any special talent for writing.

LITERATURE

Janine Tibbles on 01455 888289

We have had a very varied half year's reading. Group members take it in turns to recommend a book – or sometimes just an author – which we then read and discuss. Usually, there are varied opinions which makes for a lively afternoon. Just occasionally, though, a book will prompt similar opinions – leaving more time for the inevitable refreshments! Our reading list, plus a summary of our thoughts on the last six months' books are available on the website. We are about to try out the Leicestershire Libraries' book group lending scheme where we can select from a huge list of titles with multiple copies available for loan to book groups. We won't know exactly what we will get until the books are collected from Wigston – so there may be some surprises in store.

CHEWS

Ruth Westley on 277 1533

We continue with low numbers but were encouraged by one enthusiastic new member joining us in January. We are friendly and supporting and meet Friday mornings, three times a month - our homes for the weigh in, and once a month at a local coffee house in Blaby for a chat and progress report. Everyone is welcome.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2019

Once menus are available from the College, this will be promoted in the usual way, with forms available in the small lounge or off the website – this may be as early as July! We have 120 places available – first come, first served! 50 coach seats or make your own way.

Why not get your Festive Season off to a great start with the annual U3A Christmas Lunch at Taste Restaurant? Includes the Prize Draw as well!

Friday, 29 November 2019

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 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.

KEEPING EVERYBODY INFORMED!

Our next Newsletter will be published in December 2019, 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 22 November 2019, 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 no later than the FIRST 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 me on 277 6330*

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
9 July	What Happens When Reservoirs Go Wrong	Derek Jarram
13 Aug	100 Years of Jazz in Britain	Roger Browne
10 Sept	Hands of Genius	Graham Short
8 Oct	You Cannot Be Serious! Tales of a Wimbledon Umpire	Alan Gray
12 Nov	History of Potting (Ceramics)	Annette and John Christophers
10 Dec	Music Hall and Variety	Mark Walsh

YOUR U3A COMMITTEE 2019-2020

Chairman:	Peter Bradbury	01455 273604
Deputy Chair:	Teresa Morgan	07882 604263
Secretary:	Janine Tibbles	01455 888289
Treasurer:	Sue Wyllie	284 9959
Membership Secretary:	Barry Hillyard	277 4187
Information & Publicity:	June Hawkins	277 6330
Speaker Secretary:	Paula Wollaston	277 9385
Groups Co-ordinator:	Jenny Mills	277 2041
Technical Officer:	Teresa Morgan	07882 604263
Committee member:	Beryl Lishman	277 0405
Committee member:	Dusty Durham	277 3351
Committee member:	Isobel McDonald	367 8314
Co-opted member:	Jill Clayton	277 7154

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 **STOP PRESS** section of the **HOME PAGE!**

www.countesthorpeu3a.co.uk