

# Countesthorpe U3A Newsletter

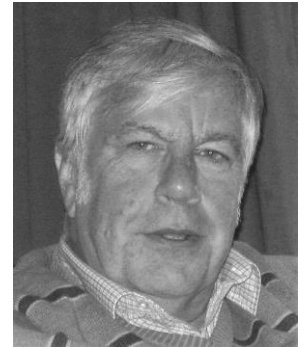
June 2016

Issue 2016/2

## CHAIRPERSON'S LETTER

Hello Everyone

It looks as though I am Chairman of Countesthorpe University of the Third Age for this coming year and the following year. I joined Countesthorpe U3A when I retired in 2008 and went onto the committee the following year. I have greatly enjoyed the experience and always find that the people I work with have a wide range of skills which are consistently engaged for the benefit of our organisation. We are always keen to see new blood in our committee, so please let any of us know if you feel you would like to contribute when the committee next forms in May 2017.



While our U3A group in Countesthorpe is self-supporting and independent of other groups, we have the benefit of a 'Network' organisation operating at county level, giving us access to a wide range of skills and ideas. The whole U3A idea is for us to be mutually self-supporting and we seem to have groups popping up all over the place where people feel that they have a hobby or interest that is likely to spark a similar reaction in other people. Long may this continue! If you have a skill, craft, interest or ability you would like to pursue, take a look at our web site. If there are no groups at the moment to suit you and you wish to start a new group please use the web site to contact us.

For anyone new to the U3A - please do not be put off by the 'University' part of our name. The aims of the organisation are to 'learn, laugh and live'. Each of these is as important as the others!

David Wild  
Chairperson

(TEL: 277 5881)

Countesthorpe



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

This is the first issue of our revised format Newsletter. As explained earlier in the year, we propose to publish twice a year, in June and December. The idea is to avoid overlap with the contents of the monthly "What's On" bulletin, and to bring you more details of what is, and has been, going on within our U3A as well as plans for the immediate future.

In this issue you will find information on the new committee, with details of their responsibilities and a brief personal profile and picture. Any committee member is always very ready and willing to help ensure that everyone makes the most of their membership. If you are looking to start up a new group – then your first port of call is the Groups Co-ordinator, Ursula Wild, or contact us through the website.

Thanks must go to the Group Leaders who do such a sterling job of ensuring our three dozen groups prosper. Also, thanks to them for providing the information on what has been happening so that this new style Newsletter is more informative than before.

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

Yes, your focus may still be on sun, sand and whatever, but this is a date you won't want to miss! This year, our lunch at Taste Restaurant at Leicester College (as in previous years) will be held on

**THURSDAY, 1 DECEMBER**

No further details are available until the College students return from their summer break and have designed the Christmas menus.

Look out for details from September onwards and collect your booking/menu choice form from the lounge. Remember that places are limited to 100, and your place is secured with return of the fully completed form and full payment – on a first come, first served basis!

## THE JOY OF THE PODCAST AND AUNTIE BBC

Earlier in the year I was in New Zealand visiting my daughter and her family. Having been many times before I was well aware of the less than interesting TV and radio access. Wonderful if one enjoys half hour American comedy shows - but not for a month!

Time can drag when the family are at work/school so I have developed many pastimes for myself but the time comes when one yearns for the good old BBC.

British television is not an option in New Zealand but I came upon the BBC iplayer radio app which I could download to my tablet computer and lo and behold I was back in touch with my world.

'Google' BBC iplayer radio and choose whether you want it from itunes or from Google Play depending on your device.

Once installed, choose your radio station and choose what you want to do from the options across the top. You can listen to what is currently being broadcast, check the radio schedule for that day, check out featured items plus other options including Podcasts



With Podcasts I could pick up a huge variety of programmes from all channels covering months and sometimes years of broadcasts, automatically downloaded to my device and all for free!

Isn't technology amazing, 14000 miles away and still in touch.

Next time you are away from home, or even if you're not, it's worth playing with.

Enjoy!

*Liz Lockwood-Jones*

# NEWS FROM SOME OF THE GROUPS

*Full details can be found on our website ([www.countesthorpeu3a.co.uk](http://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)*

You may have seen Angela Rippon on BBC1 fairly recently extolling the virtues of dancing as a way to keep fit and active. Our Country Dancing Group meets on the second and fourth Mondays of each month in Countesthorpe Village Hall between 2 and 3.30 pm and may well be a good way for you to enjoy this exercise. We aim to try out a range of dances, traditional and modern ones from England mainly, but we do indulge in other types of Folk Dance; Maypole, International, Scottish, Sword Dancing and Ribbon Dancing have all featured over the years. Please wear comfortable shoes, be prepared to get warm dancing about and remember your sense of humour!

## **British Sign Language**

*(Patsy Paterson on 277 6259)*

Our very small British Sign Language Group meets regularly as we try to keep up our knowledge of Signing through signing the times tables and poems and reporting our recent exploits. We aren't really able to teach anyone from scratch, but would be pleased to welcome folk with a little knowledge of BSL to join our meetings.

## **Allotment Gardening**

*(Glenys Catterall-Annal on 277 2495)*

This group 'potters along' as all good gardeners do! There are five people involved and this is about the right number which our plot can support. This year has seen the repair of the old rotted raised beds, using slabs which have been begged and borrowed, so all is tidy now and ready for a bumper year!

## **CHEWS**

*(Ruth on 277 1533)*

Success can be judged in several ways: losing weight and keeping some or all of it off or, alternatively, managing to halt the fearful gradual increase over time. With these two criteria in mind, we, at CHEWS can claim to be winning!

More members are welcome to our encouraging meetings, with a weekly weigh-in plus a longer meeting once a month to discuss weight management.

## **Kurling**

*(Ian Paterson on 277 6259)*

“Kurling is a competitive sport that can also be played socially. It is fully inclusive, with no barriers to age or gender. The game can be played in a range of different settings and helps develop a range of physical and teamwork skills.”

That’s the ‘official’ line, but in reality it’s a game for anyone with a sense of humour and a competitive urge. No ice involved, no granite stones and, sadly, no sweeping like you see on the telly! We play every Wednesday in the village hall at 11 o’clock. Some of us play with a ‘pusher’ as we can’t get down there any more, some of us try to win every game, some of us come to chat. You’d be made welcome whichever you want to do. £2 per week - money well spent! Just turn up and enjoy!

## **History**

*(June Hawkins on 277 6330)*

Like many of the groups offering trips out, we are a ‘floating population’ and any member is more than welcome to join us in our various activities. We hold an annual planning meeting (13 October 2016) at which we establish the programme for the forthcoming year. This tends to follow a pattern of talks (in the Methodist Chapel) in November, December and January whilst the weather is at its worst, followed by a series of history-related outings during the remainder of the year. Some of these are local and make use of shared transport, whilst others roam further afield by coach, plus a three-night break in the autumn.

So far we’ve enjoyed the remaining talk in Peter Liddle’s series on The Romans, visits to RAF Hendon, Ashby Castle and Flag Fen and Peterborough Cathedral. Still to come this year are visits to Saffron Walden, the Sicily exhibition at the British Museum, a guided walk/talk in Sapcote, Tales of the Unexpected exhibition and a guided walk at Hallaton then a three night break centred on the Ironbridge Gorge area. Our next series of talks will cover the Anglo-Saxons in Leicestershire.

We operate on the basis that the more people come forward with ideas and a willingness to help out with running the group, the better it is for all concerned! So, why not come along and try it out, and perhaps volunteer to assist with the 2017 programme? It’s good fun, with plenty of support available.

## **Solo Sunday Lunch**

*(Sheila Holmes on 277 2131)*

This is a fantastically successful group, with 30+ members attending on the Sunday after the regular monthly meeting. Usually our lunch is held at Ullesthorpe Court, with arrivals at noon for 12.30 pm; pre-booking is essential using the list in the small lounge at monthly meetings.

## **Creative Writing**

*(Mikki Wilde on 277 5509)*

You don't have to be a great writer to enjoy this group – just a willingness to have a go at scribbling something inspired by our monthly theme! We are always amazed at the huge variety of writings that emerge from a single word or short phrase! We read out our efforts, and this usually provokes a discussion of some sort. Then in the comfort of our homes, we add written comments after reading the pieces again; these are then returned to the authors the following month. We are a really happy, supportive group and would welcome new writers.

*(We hope you will enjoy 'Mosaic' – our fourth miscellany. If you didn't get your copy at the May meeting, pick one up from the small lounge – it's free to all members! Some copies of earlier booklets are available if you missed them.)*

## **Garden Appreciation**

*(Ruth Westley on 277 1533)*

This group is not yet a year old and has already had two outings this spring - Hodsock to see the snowdrops on a cold sunny day, and Coton Manor where drifts of blue under a high beech canopy lifted our spirits when the weather did its best to dampen them.

Other meetings have included a talk on 'Pruning' at Glebe Gardens, 'Problem Solving' (how resourceful gardeners are), and by the time you are reading this, we will have been treated to a demonstration at Palmer's Nursery, Enderby on planting up 'Tubs, Pots and Containers'. We meet every month for an outing, a talk/demonstration or to discuss issues amongst ourselves. Experienced gardeners or novices are always welcome to join us.

## **Theatre**

*(June Hawkins on 277 6330)*

With no fixed membership, this group is open to anybody within the U3A who fancies a visit to the theatre with minimal effort! We try to offer a wide range of different performances, usually including one ballet each year, and a mix of musical theatre and more serious plays. We support local theatres such as Curve, Concordia (Hinckley) and Market Harborough as well as venturing further afield to Birmingham or Milton Keynes (both under an hour by coach), and occasionally to London or other venues.

Tickets must be reserved with the theatres a very long while ahead to get the best 'deals' and so intending theatregoers need to keep their eyes open and plan well ahead to avoid disappointment! We usually have a break in July and August, as there is a poorer selection of suitable shows, and many of us are busy with holidays and domestic commitments in the summer. With prices starting at £20 including transport, this is a grand way to enjoy the theatre, in the company of great U3A friends, old and new.

## **Fit for Life**

*(Sheila Holmes on 277 2131)*

No need to book for this 'age-appropriate' fitness class held each Monday in the Village Hall between 11.30 am and 12.30 pm! There's a mix of aerobic, mobility and strengthening exercises to music, plus a lot of fun, as well as the physical and mental wellbeing to be gained! Just £3 – why not come along and try it – the only thing to lose is stiffness, aches and pains and perhaps a few pounds!

## **Nordic Walking**

*(Barry Hillyard on 277 4187)*

We REALLY could do with some more members! This is probably the smallest group in the U3A! You don't need to know how to do it, as it is as easy as ABC and walking poles are available to loan if you don't have your own. Why not come along and give it a try – meet at the Willoughby Rd Playing Fields on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 9.30 am and walk with us for up to an hour. No mud and no stiles – just a pleasant walk with the aid of poles to take the pressure off knees and hips. (No cost, either – what could be better?)

## **Discussion**

*(Liz Lockwood-Jones on 240 2296)*

Meeting on the fourth Friday of each month in various members' homes, this group numbers anything from a dozen to seventeen! We discuss all kinds of topics, from 'Happiness' to 'Our Future and the EU'. It never gets too serious, and we seldom, if ever, actually arrive at any conclusions – but we all thoroughly enjoy the discourse (and the refreshments which follow!) We're always happy to welcome new members – just come along/ring Liz.

## **Travel**

*(Jill Clayton on 277 7154)*

Our visit to the Netherlands proved very successful, with an excellent ferry crossing from Hull to Rotterdam. The Keukenhof gardens were fantastic, and we made a number of other interesting visits from our hotel base in Valkenburg. Next up will be the trip to Northern Ireland, and then the now-traditional visit to Wengen high up in the Swiss Alps in August.

We have enjoyed a range of day trips – most of which have been very well supported. These have included a fascinating visit to Aldi at Atherstone, and Bletchley Park. Our system of members suggesting, researching and leading on the day is working well and provides for a wider variety of visits.

Future trips include a day at Uttoxeter Races, Ely, Eltham Palace and Wansford Railway Museum. For the latest information, see What's On or the website, and book early with Jill to avoid disappointment!

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT** – as delivered at the AGM on 10 May 2016

It goes without saying that the past year has been a busy one. One glance at the diary on the website shows that barely a day goes by without some activity somewhere in the community on behalf of the U3A. Last year I subjected you to rather long and detailed analysis of our actives. This year I will restrict myself to a summary.

This year we have formed new groups for Jigsaws, Garden Appreciation, Ten Pin bowling, Library Support and Cryptic Crosswords. Unfortunately one of our long standing Groups, Singing for Fun, has ceased due to lack of support. Another group, Play Reading has had to stop not because of lack of support but because the Library Service for play sets is now provided from Nottingham making the borrowing of Play sets unviable. While it is sad groups cease to operate, some of them of long standing, it does mean that our U3A reflects the needs and demands of our current membership.

Of the many exciting places that the travel group visited included Wengen, Valkenberg and, of course, exotic Cardiff. The history group also went to Salisbury. The Theatre group also had a full and entertaining programme.

I'd like to say a personal thank you to Meg who had the idea for a DVD bank, and who provided a large pool to get it going. I hope that if you borrowed a DVD you will return it for others to share. Also I apologise to Meg that, for a number of reasons, I didn't make the necessary announcements at the right time.

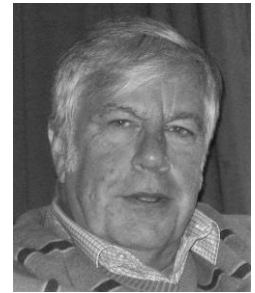
On the administration side we had a few problems to solve. The most important as far I was concerned was finding someone to put out and pack our chairs for our monthly meeting. I am grateful to the mafiosi network that is our community for helping locate Michael from Blaby and I am pleased that we no longer have to prevail on the committee and a willing band of helpers to do that. It makes such a difference to the way in which we can conduct our meetings.

As you will hear in a moment or two, we continue to live within our means, just. This is my last report as Chairman. During my period on the committee and my tenure as Chairman I have learnt a lot about what makes this U3A tick. The trouble with taking on the responsibility for a successful organisation is that things can only go downhill. I'm pleased to say I seem to have got away with it! We still appear to be a growing and vibrant U3A. Not that it was through my efforts; we have dedicated group leaders, I have had a talented and supportive committee and you, the membership, have been unfailingly kind, helpful and enthusiastic. The greatest thing I learned is that whatever the problem, someone, somewhere was willing help. I can sincerely say that for me it has been a privilege to serve on the committee and to be your Chair. I'd like to thank my fellow committee members, current and past, for their help and support during my time in the Chair, and the many members who in many ways - small and not so small - have helped me along the way. I wish my successor every success in the coming years.



## MEET THE COMMITTEE FOR 2016-7

**DAVID WILD (Chairperson)** is married to Ursula. He is not native to this area but was soon hooked on village life after buying a house in Countesthorpe in 1978. He retired in February 2008 from a database-design career in insurance and quickly found that the U3A offered a very warm welcome. He enjoys a rewarding time with History Group trips, Sci/Tech meetings, Pilates, walks and the warm buzz of the committee meetings. He also runs the Guitar group.



**SUE 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 Handbells, Theatre and Travel groups, as well as taking occasional walks with the SWANs. She also acts as Treasurer for two other charities, and enjoys crown green bowls, mosaic work and travel.



**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 granddaughter. She welcomes the chance for more U3A involvement by serving on the committee.



**JUNE HAWKINS (Publicity and Information)** has lived in Countesthorpe since 1979 and 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 Travel, Creative Writing, Literature, Discussion, Fit for Life, Nordic Walking, Kurling and Pilates groups and is also Group Leader for Theatre and History. She maintains the website and produces the What's On, Newsletter, group activity leaflets and the slide presentation. She edited the four 'Creative Writing Miscellanies', and was involved with the website development.



**CHRIS CLARICOATES (Secretary)** was born on the Isle of Wight and lived there for 14 years before her move to Countesthorpe. Married to Tony, they have three children who all attended local schools. Chris taught at Leysland High school for 25 years before her retirement and she now enjoys participating in the U3A History, Creative Writing, Theatre, Fit for Life, Country Dancing and Birdwatching groups.



**URSULA WILD (Groups Co-ordinator)** was born in Lancashire, married to David, and moved to Countesthorpe in 1978 where she was soon involved in all aspects of village life, including supply teaching in most of the local schools. She finally settled at St John Fisher Catholic Primary School and stayed there until retirement. She has become involved in many U3A activities, including History, Folk Dancing, Walking and Theatre. She is also the Group Leader for Pilates, and her other hobbies include Travel, Lace-making and French Twinning Activities.



**BARRY HILLYARD (Technical Support Officer)** 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 and Travel.



**HELEN BULL (Speaker Finder)** Helen has lived in Blaby for 50 years. On retirement from her post at Brockington College she sought a social/interest group to fill her anticipated spare time and has found companionship through involvement in the U3A, enjoying many aspects, including the monthly meetings and the Theatre, History, Literature, Walking and Allotment groups. Outside the U3A, Helen's interests include frequent visits to her three children and six grandchildren, and gardening, yoga and knitting.



**PETER BRADBURY (Vice-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 nine grandchildren. Peter joined the U3A in 2010 and participates in handbells, art, history, bird-watching, travel and groups. He enjoys DIY, reading, classical music and history, as well as voluntary work within Sapcote.



**GRAHAM COX** has been a member since 2008, having taken early retirement in 2002 from Insurance Broking. Married to Jane, they set up home in Countesthorpe in 1969 before moving to Narborough in 1978. He has been an active member of the Scout Association, holding both Leader and Commissioner Warrants. His hobbies include carpet bowls, walking, horology including restoration of mechanical clocks, book collecting, gardening and decorating.



## WISE WORDS

First I was dying to finish my high school and start college.  
And then I was dying to finish college and start working.  
Then I was dying to marry and have children.  
And then I was dying for my children to become old enough so I could go back to work.  
But then I was dying to retire.  
And now I am dying, and suddenly I realized I forgot to live.

Please don't let this happen to you – appreciate your situation and enjoy each day . . . old friend.

To make money we lose our health;  
And then to restore our health we lose our money . . .  
We live as if we are never going to die,  
And we die as if we never lived.



## MOSAIC BOOKLET



If you did not receive your copy of Mosaic (the fourth miscellany of poems, prose and sketches from the Creative Writing Group) as the May meeting, then please collect your copy from the small lounge at the next general meeting you attend.

Mosaic is free to all 2016 Countesthorpe U3A members and is presented with the compliments of the committee.

## KEEPING EVERYBODY INFORMED!

Our next Newsletter will be published in December, and news from the Groups will be much appreciated. Copy deadline is Thursday, 1 December, 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 by the FIRST Tuesday of the month, to ensure inclusion in the next issue. Many thanks to all who have contributed this year!

*Contact me by email at: [jhawkins45@talktalk.net](mailto:jhawkins45@talktalk.net) or call on 0116 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
12 July	Dirty and Smelly (NT Textiles)	Mrs J Moulds
9 Aug	The Story of Rubber and its Bounce	Malcolm Glasse
14 Sept	Alice Hawkins: a Suffragette in the Family	Peter Barratt
11 Oct	Prison and Little Dorritt	Helen Parson
8 Nov	Tibet	Sue Ablett
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	

**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"