

Countesthorpe U3A Newsletter



Oct-Nov 2011

Issue 2011/5

Chairperson's Letter

(Tel: 277 5881)

Dear Friends

Summer is over, grandchildren are back at school and autumn is just about to flourish. I do hope you all had a good summer break even though the weather has been so changeable. The fruit trees seem to be bowed down with fruit and my cupboards are once again laden with home-made jam.

All our hibernating U3A groups are once more getting into the full swing of activities and meetings and they are looking forward to welcoming new members. If you want to try something new – be brave – there is a whole new set of friends waiting to welcome you.

Of course, no sooner have the summer holidays finished than we need to start planning ahead for Christmas activities. I believe the Bell Ringers are already getting bookings for the Christmas Season! We also need to get ideas and volunteers for decorating the Christmas tree at Foston. These things don't happen overnight or through the Magic Fairy, so please step forward!

Looking even further ahead, please contact any of the committee if you can suggest a speaker for our monthly meetings. I've already had several excellent suggestions from members of our group but more would be most welcome.

Our Travel and Theatre groups go from strength to strength with the number and quality of events they make available to us, but please can everyone take a moment to consider their car usage. Whether for outings or the Monthly Meetings, please share cars when possible to reduce the number of vehicles. We can't always park for the day or evening in the Village Hall car park as other user groups may need it but, when this is permitted, we are asked to park at the very rear of the car park. If you should need to park on the roads, then please ensure that you park considerately, certainly avoiding obstructing people's drives or access. Just use common sense, as we always do!

Best wishes
Ursula Wild
Chairperson

Countesthorpe



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

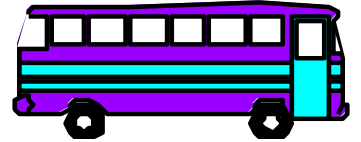
DIARY DATES: Oct/Nov 2011

Date	Group	Activity	Venue/time
11 Oct	Monthly Meeting AGM	Antiques <i>with Charles Hanson</i>	Village Hall from 1.30 pm ('speakers' 2.15 pm)
16 Oct	Solo Lunch	Cosby Golf Club	Noon for 12.30 pm
17 Oct	Creative Writing	Seasonal theme (eg Autumn, Hallowe'en etc)	2 pm at Brook Court
18 Oct	Travel	Visit to Houses of Parliament, with Guided Tour and Tea	8.00 am from Village Hall Car Parking from 7.30 am PLEASE BE PROMPT!
19 Oct	Literature	"Room" by Emma Donoghue	2 pm at Brook Court
21 Oct	CHEWS	Main meeting + weigh-in	Dorothy's home, between 9.15 and 10.15 am
21 Oct	Ethnic Dining	Spanish Meal at La Tasca	Granby Street, 1 pm
24 Oct	Folk Dancing		2.00 – 3.30 pm Village Hall
24 Oct	Travel	Planning Meeting	6.30 pm Methodist Room
25 Oct	SWANS	Jane Barnes' Farm Walk	12.45 pm from Village Hall
27 Oct	CARE Walking	5.5 miles from the Pig in Muck, Claybrooke Magna	9.15 am from Village Hall
28 Oct	Discussion	"Freedom of the Press"	June's home, 10.00 am
1 Nov	SWANS	Cosby Circular via Hill Lane	10.30 am, corner of Linden Av and Winchester Rd
2 Nov	Scrabble	(+ Upwords and Rummikubs)	2 – 4.30 pm, Brook Court
8 Nov	Monthly Meeting	NSPCC – Making a Difference to Children - <i>Jennifer Thomas</i>	Village Hall from 1.30 pm (speaker 2.15 pm)
9 Nov	Flower Arranging	Small Lounge, Village Hall. 2.00 – 4.00 pm	
13 Nov	Solo Lunch	Lancaster Arms, Desford	Noon for 12.30 pm
14 Nov	Folk Dancing		2.00 – 3.30 pm Village Hall
16 Nov	Literature	Any book by Sebastian Barry	2.00 pm Brook Court
24 Nov	CARE Walking	Details to follow	9.30 am from Village Hall
25 Nov	Discussion	"My Christmas"	Jill Clayton's home, 10 am
28 Nov	Folk Dancing		2.00 – 3.30 pm Village Hall

U3A GET WELL CARDS

If you know of anyone in the U3A who is ill and who would appreciate a 'Get Well Soon' card from friends in the U3A, then please telephone Sheila Holmes on 277 2131 with the details.

T R A V E L



PLANNING MEETING:

Wednesday, 24 October at 6.30 pm in the Methodist School Room on Wigston Street. Please come along with your suggestions for future day trips or short breaks in 2012!

HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT: The coach will leave PROMPTLY at 8.00 am for the timed, guided tour and cream tea with our local MP. The car park gates will be open from 7.30 am for you to leave your cars at the far REAR of the Village Hall. Please be in good time as we cannot wait!

WENGEN 2012:

If you are interested in joining the group in Wengen next Summer, then please telephone Jenny as soon as possible on 277 2041.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Creative Writing

Leadership of this group rotates amongst the membership, and Mikki Wilde has now taken over from Ruth Westley. Mikki can be contacted on 277 5509.

Beginners' Bridge

Sadly, Michael Taylor has decided to relinquish leadership of this long-established group. Many thanks are due to Michael (and Shirley!) for hosting this group in their home over a number of years, and for helping so many people to start playing this fascinating game.

So, we are looking to find another willing and able person to introduce future bridge players to the intricacies of bridge! Anyone interested should contact the Groups Co-ordinator, Sherry Burditt, on 277 1212.

TRAVEL GROUP – RECENT VISITS

We have enjoyed 2 trips to London and one to Oxford – the first to the BBC at Wood Lane. Prior to our guided tour we saw the iconic picture of the outside of the BBC and some members of the group had their photographs taken outside the ‘Tardis’!

First, we visited the newsroom where we were able to view the journalists at work through a glass wall. It was explained that the room is manned 24 hours a day with journalists working a 3-shift system. We were then taken to see the ‘star’ dressing rooms where we were given an insight into some of the demands of certain ‘stars’! We continued with a visit to the weather forecasting section with a demonstration of presenting the weather with the backdrop of maps and illustrations. We learned that all weather presenters are meteorologists and not just ordinary television presenters as, personally, I had presumed.

We then visited 2 studios which appeared to be like large halls with plain walls and banks of ceiling bars on which were mounted various types of lights and cameras. A feature of each area was its ability to be used for many purposes including those requiring a studio audience. We also saw the adjoining area housing the programme manager and staff, who are responsible for all the filming with remotely-controlled cameras being used to record events.

Our tour ended with a visit to a small studio specially adapted to act as a demonstration area. Two presenters were ‘volunteered’ from the group – as is usual in these circumstances. A young man stepped up and I was the second presenter. We were reading items from the news using the auto-cue with ‘breaking news’ about the visiting group! Following the news a short quiz was devised similar to ‘Name that Tune’ and Alan Denny was persuaded to take part – well done Alan!

This was a most enjoyable visit giving an insight into broadcasting and television.

Our second London trip was to The Royal Mews and Buckingham Palace. We spent the first hour viewing the carriages and cars used on State Occasions; all were beautifully polished! An auto guide provided information on which carriages were used for individual events and also on the horses and training required. The Gold Carriage was set up with models of the 8 horses required to pull a carriage of such weight. We also saw the claret-coloured coach which was used for the recent Royal Wedding. Personally I very much enjoy the spectacle of all state

occasions so it was very interesting to learn something of the work which goes on behind the scenes.

We then entered the Palace and found ourselves using the entrance under the overhang seen when the Royal party enters from coaches, cars etc. Again, an audio guide was available, providing excellent descriptions of all the State rooms, pictures, photographs, artefacts and items of interest. We also visited the room in which Investitures take place. Needless to say, the interior of the Palace could only be described as absolutely beautiful with much red and gold and with sumptuous carpets.

We were so lucky in that we were invited to sit and view video about the making of the Duchess of Cambridge's Wedding Dress prior to seeing the actual dress. In my view, it was absolutely beautiful with so much hand-made lace. We also saw her shoes and I renewed my admiration for her when I thought of getting on board the State Coach in those shoes and that dress! We also saw (must have been a model) the cake which I know, but can hardly believe, was made at Fleckney; it was so intricate and included representation of many facets with personal meaning for the royal couple.

The visit concluded with an exit via the covered area serving light refreshments and the Palace gardens. Unfortunately, the heavens opened as we were leaving the gift shop so the path we were expecting to leave by became flooded and impassable. We were then taken to a different gate so that my carefully devised instructions on which way to turn to join the coach were wrong. Fortunately, the whole party managed to find us and we all arrived back in Countesthorpe a very happy group.

Our latest visit was to Oxford organized by Barry Hillyard – many thanks to him. We were so lucky weather-wise and I took an open-top bus ride around Oxford, with commentary, in the morning and after lunch joined the guided walking tours (3 guides) organized by Barry. We saw many lovely buildings, learned about the history of Oxford as a centre of learning and visited one of the Universities. My group visited Wadham College and from the quadrangle we saw the students' accommodation, seminar rooms, dining room and we were able to go into the Chapel.

We also were taken to view some very old and picturesque taverns. The guide was excellent and, as well as information relating to the buildings, she was able to tell us the names of many of the famous past students who had studied at Oxford. I just hope I can remember the whereabouts of all these passages and buildings because I certainly mean to visit Oxford again in the near future!

Jenny Mills

FOLK DANCING



We're now back in our normal routine of meeting on the second and fourth Mondays of the month in the Village Hall from 2.00 – 3.30 pm.

Just bring your sense of humour and wear comfy shoes!

Details from Patsy Paterson on 277 6259

HAVE YOU CHECKED 'IT' OUT YET?

'IT' is our official website and if you've not already explored it, then don't waste a moment longer – just go to

www.countesthorpeu3a.co.uk

As well as the basic information about our U3A, there is a very comprehensive 'What's On' section, pages for each Activity Group (some of which change regularly to include reports on recent events) ways to make contact with us, and access to lots of pictures including many from outings and holidays. See also the STOP PRESS on the homepage for up-to-the minute news. You can also download the current Newsletter.

An archive to include recollections from the early days of our U3A, and past Newsletters has been started, and will be an ongoing development. If any member has anything they would like to contribute to the archive, please contact June. Email: jhawkins45@talktalk.net or Te: 277 6330.

Please be assured that the printed bi-monthly Newsletter and the monthly update 'What's On' (*Marketplace*) will continue just as usual!

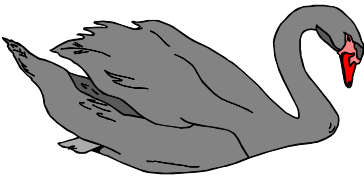
Latest copy dates for your contributions!

- Wed, 2 Nov for November What's On and website update
 - Wed, 7 Dec for December issue of What's On, website update and the Dec/Jan Newsletter
 - Wed, 4 Jan for the January issue of What's On and website update
- Editor: June Hawkins (tel) 277 6330, (email) jhawkins45@talktalk.net
or post to: 30 Marston Crescent, Countesthorpe, LE8 5PY.

SWANS

Eleven people met at Pamela's home to discuss the next six months' programme. It was decided to use the previous season's programmes for a pattern in the future. Accordingly, our next planning meeting will be at Glebe Gardens for coffee and a quick chat to review the Spring/Summer programme from 2008 and alter it if necessary.

Pamela is looking into a venue for the SWANS Christmas lunch and, whilst this is likely to be the former Southfields College, this will be confirmed and further details provided later.



Pamela on 277 2653 (6-7 pm preferred).

CROSSNESS ENGINE TRUST AND THAMES BARRIER

The trip to Crossness Engine Trust was to see four magnificent rotative beam engines, built by James Watt & Company, which were used to pump London's sewage into the Thames on ebbing tides. We saw one restored engine working under steam.

We then moved onto the Thames Barrier, which was quite peaceful and quiet. We had good views of the Barrier with Canary Wharf in the distance, and also the Millennium Walkway which followed the Thames into London.

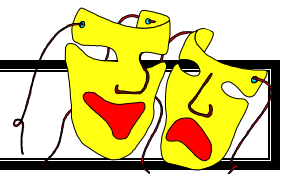
Construction of the Barrier started late in 1974. It became operational in October 1982 and was first used in February 1983.

We had a delightful day with the Countesthorpe U3A Photography Group.



John Thacker

THEATRE PROGRAMME



Date	Play	Cost	Venue	Leaving Village Hall	Pay by
Wed 19 Oct	South Pacific	£37	Milton Keynes (2.30 pm)	12.45 pm	FULL
Thurs 17 Nov	Strictly Gershwin	£28	Milton Keynes (2.00 pm)	12 noon	FULL
Thurs 8 Dec	42 nd Street	£28	Curve	6.15 pm (TBC)	FULL
Wed 18 Jan	Gondoliers	£28	Royal Theatre, Northampton	6.00 pm	8 Nov
Wed 15 Feb	Nutcracker	£29	Milton Keynes (2.30 pm)	12.30 pm	13 Dec
Tues 23 Mar	Under Milk Wood	£16	Market Harborough	6.45 pm	10 Jan
Tues 3 July	Lord Arthur Savile's Crime	£16	Market Harborough	6.45 pm	8 May

GONDOLIERS: Spend the evening in Venice (*OK – actually Northampton!*) enjoying this favourite Gilbert and Sullivan operetta.

NUTCRACKER: Matthew Bourne's modern interpretation of this favourite Tchaikovsky ballet, with Anthony Ward's marvellous sets and costumes. Not to be missed!

UNDER MILK WOOD: (*Dylan Thomas*) An all-seeing narrator invites the audience to listen to the dreams and innermost thoughts of the inhabitants of the imaginary small Welsh village, Llareggub.

LORD ARTHUR SAVILE'S CRIME: Based on the story by Oscar Wilde. Lord Arthur is told by a fortune teller that he will commit a murder. Being a gentleman, he resolves to do the deed before his marriage to Sybil. But if it can go wrong, then it will!

June Hawkins – tel: 277 6330 or email: jhawkins45@talktalk.net

PARKING FOR THEATRE TRIPS IS USUALLY AVAILABLE AT THE REAR OF COUNTESTHORPE VILLAGE HALL – NOT THE FRONT CAR PARK, PLEASE! PICK-UPS IN BLABY ARE POSSIBLE EXCEPT FOR MARKET HARBOROUGH VISITS - INDICATE WHEN BOOKING. PLEASE ADVISE ME OF ANY SPECIAL ACCESS REQUIREMENTS.