

In this edition

- Monthly Meeting news
- News from the Committee
- News from the Groups
- Articles from Groups
- And more

NEWSLETTER for Oundle & District

Edition Number 192
October 2024

If you would like to find out more about Oundle & District u3a, take a look at <https://oundleanddistrict.u3asite.uk> or contact Chairman: oundleu3achairman@gmail.com Membership Secretary: oundleu3amembership@gmail.com Website Manager: oundleu3awebmanager@outlook.com

Registered Charity Number 1183800

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

After writing last month's message, I have been trying to practise what I preach! Yes, I have done plenty of walking and rushing about but I have also taken time to reflect on lots of things.

Personally, I realise that I need to go back to basics with one thing and that is my handwriting, which definitely needs improving. Over the past few years, in my haste to write things down quickly, it has really deteriorated – so much so that I often can't decipher it myself!

I have always envied people who have beautiful handwriting; mine has never been elegant. I remember that we had handwriting lessons at Oundle Primary School (does anyone else remember these?) and I can still picture Mr Denley's lovely lettering on the blackboard. I have promised myself that I will take time and effort to write neatly in future – I will let you know how that goes!

Basics are the foundations of everything we do and sometimes it is useful to revisit both simple and important matters that might have been ignored for a while.

In the u3a movement, the basic principle is that it a 'self-help' organisation run by the voluntary efforts of its members; no-one has to be an expert, although for administrative purposes there needs to be a Group 'leader' (sometimes called a facilitator or administrator in some u3as). When we join or start a Group, we need to consider the basics such as: how accessible is the chosen venue, is the Group inclusive, are we communicating clearly, have we agreed the way our Group will develop. These all feature in our Guidelines for Groups, which we have recently updated, and which are on our website if you wish to take a look.

One of the Vice-Chair candidates at the TAT AGM later this month says in her supporting video that u3a 'should make everything as accessible as possible to as many as possible', which I think is just what we should be doing. We are not an exclusive club and we should be spreading the news about the benefits of u3a.

And let's not forget our strapline '*Learn, laugh, live*' which brilliantly sums up what u3a is all about. Of course, we want to learn new skills and gain new knowledge but we want to enjoy ourselves at the same time and feel that we are really making the most of our lives.

Enjoy yourselves.

Gill

PS: Any handwriting tips would be much appreciated!

NEWSLETTER EDITORS: oundleu3anewslettereditors@gmail.com. Please send us your articles as early as you can.

MONDAY 14th OCTOBER

Colin Hill

And his talk will be

Would you Adam and Eve it?

Queen Victoria Hall,
Oundle

Doors open at 2.00pm
for tea/coffee and
biscuits

MONDAY 11th NOVEMBER

Helen Frost

And her talk will be

**Keeping Faith at the Front
during the First World
War.**

Queen Victoria Hall,
Oundle

Doors open at 2.00pm
for tea/coffee and
biscuits

MONTHLY MEETINGS



For our monthly meeting in September, we welcomed back **John Nowell**, ex-RAF pilot, author and photographer, who spoke to us about 'A Day Above Northamptonshire.' Despite the grey and rainy weather that afternoon, John's talk was very well attended, and we were soon transported to the skies above Northamptonshire by means of his wonderful aerial photographs which gave us a unique view of our county. The interactive element of John's talk was much enjoyed, especially when some of us **did** manage to correctly identify locations such as Wicksteed Park and Rockingham Castle. We learned about the links of the famous to Northamptonshire: Amy Johnson, Clark

Gable and Lord Cardigan to name a few. We heard about the importance of Towcester in horse racing history, the 1,500-bed field hospital at Lilford Hall in World War Two and the link between Sulgrave Manor and the flag of the USA. We also saw the work of the well-equipped police helicopter and the air ambulance in the skies above us. Is Northamptonshire the English county with the largest number of stately homes? Not sure! But we do know how fortunate we are to live in such an interesting, beautiful and historic area.

The speaker for our October meeting on **Monday 14th October** will be **Colin Hill** who served as a uniformed police officer in the Metropolitan Police from 1977 to 2007 and in the late 80s/early 90s was a Close Protection Officer with the Royal Family. His talk, full of stories about the incidents and situations he encountered during his years of service, is entitled 'Would you Adam and Eve it?' Thinking back to the year of Queen Elizabeth's Silver Jubilee in 1977, it will be interesting to hear of the changes a Metropolitan police officer would have seen over his thirty years' service up to 2007. We are pleased to welcome Colin Hill for his first visit to Oundle.



The speaker at our monthly meeting on **Monday 11th November** will be Helen Frost. Her illustrated talk is entitled 'Keeping Faith at the Front during the First World War.' With a professional background in teaching and lecturing in ESOL and English, Helen is a passionate historian, who is fascinated by the lesser-known individual stories from the Great War. Through delivering her talks, she aims to uphold the importance and relevance of remembrance and the legacies of those who served. She has had articles published in several magazines including 'Stand To' which is the academic journal published by the Western Front Association as well as articles for 'Whizzbang' which is the monthly newsletter of the Northamptonshire Branch of the Western Front Association.

So how did the men and women from many different countries and faiths observe their religion overseas whilst serving in the Great War? How did they cope with the constant mental and physical strain that years of war perpetuated?

Helen's talk will focus on two particular aspects: firstly, the unusual true stories of unarmed Chaplains who went far beyond their calling in their kindness, reassurance and care to soldiers and nurses on the front line; secondly, the first-hand accounts of people who kept their faith (in a non-religious sense), trusting each other in the terrible years of war.

We are very pleased to welcome Helen for this inspiring talk.

Please remember to bring your membership card to the meeting as it makes signing in a lot quicker.

PLEASE NOTE: Doors still open at 2.00pm, but Meetings will now start at 2.30pm and not 2.40pm

Information from our Committee Meeting on Monday 23rd September:

We reviewed the August quiz.

We discussed arrangements for the December Monthly Meeting.

We finalised arrangements for the Group Leaders' meeting in October.

Gill Phillips and Gill Potts will represent and vote on behalf of our u3a at the TAT AGM on October 16th.

We discussed Committee roles and agreed that a special general meeting be held to alter the clause in the Constitution about length of service on the Committee. (*See Important Information below.*)

We agreed that new Recruitment leaflets should be designed and printed.

A flavour of the reports from individual Committee members since the last meeting:

Chairman (Gill Potts): amended the Guidelines for Groups; attended the Friends of QVH monthly meeting; met with Gill Phillips about the new website; with Barbara Ding, attended an online Q&A session on Fit for the Future.

Business Secretary (Jane Hayward): Minutes of the previous meeting; getting u3a files (hard copies) up to date; transfer of all u3a folders to the u3a laptop.

Treasurer (Barbara Ding): paid monthly invoices; Houghton Hall payments; checked information from the TAT Annual Report and reported to the Committee; updated Finance information in the Guidelines for Groups.

Membership Secretary (Barbara Bett): enrolling new Members; Beacon work with Gill Potts: updated the attendance computer list for Monthly Meetings. We currently have 618 Members.

Web Manager (Gill Phillips): worked with our migrator from SiteWorks to prepare for the migration to the new site; edited pages, added documents, images, contacts. The new site is now live.

Groups' Co-ordinator (Lidia Douglas): amended the Guidelines for Groups; sent information to Web Manager for the new site; contacted Group Leaders about the October meeting.

Programme Secretary (Carolyn Traynor): emails to forthcoming and prospective speakers; information for the Newsletters.

Theatre and Outings (Gill Potts): reported on the T&O Group's meeting on 6th August.

Publicity (Gill Potts): advertised outings in the Newsletter; Archive Books up to date.

OUR NEW WEBSITE IS UP AND RUNNING

<https://oundleandddistrict.u3asite.uk>

As of 20th September our new website is live online. Please do have a look and see what you think. The website is by no means perfect and still has a way to go but it is, I hope, user-friendly. It is the culmination of much training and many hours spent slaving over a hot computer, so please be gentle with your comments!

One plea: the website is for our members (or potential members) and in order for it to be successful it needs to continuously evolve. If you would like me to change or add an item, then please contact me on oundleu3awebmanager@outlook.com – or use the link on the Contacts page on the website.

Gill Phillips Web Manager



Theatre and Outings

Nottingham: The coach will leave Oundle at 3.30pm to allow time for a meal before the concert at 7.30pm. Cost is £49.50pp. (Coach and Tier 1 seat.) A nearby Italian restaurant will be booked for anyone who is on their own and wishes to join a group of other singles.

Please contact Nadine Edwards on 01832 274521 or oundleu3achairman@gmail.com

Closing date for booking is 31st October with only 7 places now left.

Wednesday 26th March: Blood Brothers at the New Theatre, Peterborough. The coach will leave Oundle at 6.30pm. Cost is £51pp (coach and excellent seat)

Please contact Sandra Philpot 01832 273891 or oundleu3achairman@gmail.com



The weather was overcast and damp when we set off on Thursday 5th September for Houghton Hall; however our day was not spoiled – there was so much to see and enjoy.

The house itself is remarkable with its high ceilings, ornate tapestries, huge fireplaces and beautiful paintings. Outside, across the 300-acre parkland is 'Time Horizon', a large-scale installation of 100 life-size cast-iron figures created by Antony Gormley – a very impressive sight.

The large walled garden was delightful. Though late summer, it was still a riot of colour with roses, dahlias, many perennials and rows of espalier apple trees.

The model soldier museum provided a small-scale tour of British military history. Each model was painstakingly painted and carefully positioned. The information leaflet provided interesting detail of each campaign.

The café certainly did not disappoint, with its tempting selection of home-made pastries and cakes; it proved a welcome addition to our grand day out.

Important information

Monthly Meetings: Doors will open for our Monthly Meetings in Queen Victoria Hall at 2.00pm as usual, but we will start the Chairman's welcome at 2.30pm in future.

Group Leaders: We are looking forward to seeing you on Wednesday 23rd October at 2.30pm at Barnwell Village Hall for our annual get-together.

December Meeting: Monday 9th December: This will be our Christmas Extravaganza, with entertainment from our own members. Tickets cost £2 each and will be on sale at the October and November meetings or from Barbara Ding 01832 273056. Tickets sell fast – so don't delay! Please remember you will need a ticket even if you are performing.

Special General Meeting: We intend to hold a very short meeting at the start of our December meeting to amend a sentence in our Constitution to enable Committee members to stay in post for longer than three years. Full details will be emailed or posted to you in November.

New Website: Last month, Gill Phillips, our Web Manager, wrote about the move to our new website. Gill has spent hours getting the site ready for going live and I would like to record our gratitude to her for all of her work on this. Please do visit the new site, which has a new address: <https://oundleanddistrict.u3asite.uk> and take a look. It has a much more modern look and is very easy to navigate. If you have any photos of Group meetings or visits, please send them to her. We want our website to be interesting, not only to our Members but also to anyone else who happens to look at it!

National u3a Matters

Recently, a vote was held for Vice Chair of the Third Age Trust. The Committee read all of the information and watched the supporting videos. Margaret Fiddes, trustee for Yorkshire and the Humber, got our vote and has just been elected. She had been one of the instigators of the u3a Festival in York in July, which you can read about on page 7 of *u3a Matters*.

Ian Cassidy will take over from Sam Mauger as CEO of the Trust at the AGM, which Gill Phillips and I will attend online on 16th October.

Alan Walmsley will take over as Chair from Liz Thackray at the AGM. Liz has written her final article as Chair on page 90 of *u3a Matters*.

Having considered all of the information about 'Fit for the Future', (see pages 19 of *u3a Matters* for more information) our u3a will be voting in favour of the proposed changes to the structure of the Third Age Trust.

You can contact all the following groups via their Group link on the new website.



Play Reading 2: We have space in our group for two or three new members. We meet in the afternoon at 2.30pm on the first Thursday of the month.



Shakespeare Group 4: We have space for two or three new Members in our Group. We meet on the second and fourth Thursday of each month from 2.00pm–4.00pm in each other's homes. We usually choose a play, research it, read it together and watch it on DVD but from time to time we stray to other Bard-related topics. We also enjoy going to live screenings and productions or talks.



Quizzes 'n' Puzzles With a couple of members recently leaving the group, we have a couple of spaces. We meet on the second Thursday of the month at 2.00pm in each other's houses and do a mixture of quizzes and word games etc. and generally have a good laugh.

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

GARDEN GROUP 3's visit to Burghley

As the evenings start drawing in, we tend to visit gardens and nurseries nearer home and our visit in September was to Burghley. There was a hive of activity going on as filming was taking place in the house and thus it wasn't open to the public. However that wasn't a problem as we really wanted to visit the gardens to see what had changed since we were last there some ten years or so back. There were two very different gardens open to the public, The Sculpture Garden and the Garden of Surprises.



The Sculpture Garden featured works on loan by more than 30 different artists which are set in a beautiful and tranquil garden as an open-air gallery. They are displayed alongside sweeping borders, broad drifts of wildflowers and naturalistic planting, with paths leading to all sorts of nooks and crannies. There are fabulous views across Capability Brown's great lake. Some of the sculptures took a little getting used to!

There is also a children's play area with climbing frames and other activities which are very cleverly hidden away so they can make as much noise as they like and not disturb anyone.

A spectacular viewing platform overlooks the Garden of Surprises which is inspired by the Elizabethan fascination with astrology and astronomy. It is based on the original designs by the first Lord Burghley and features a very interesting longitudinal dial. There are numerous water features around every corner, each very different to the previous one, from rills to fountains and still pools. Behind a wrought iron gate were what seemed to be three herons, until you realised that a cleverly placed mirror was reflecting back two images from different angles.



We all felt we had only scratched the surface and there was a lot more to see. And then of course there are the South Gardens to explore, but these are only open on certain days of the year, so I think we might be paying another visit, but this time to include the South Gardens.

POTENTIAL NEW GROUP

Lidia Douglas groupscoordinatoroundleu3a@gmail.com

Journey through Dante's *Inferno*. Robert-Louis Abrahamson has taught Dante at university level and, after retiring, with the WEA. He has produced 102 podcasts on Dante's *Divine Comedy*, and his book *Going through Hell* is awaiting publication. After twenty years away, he has returned to Oundle and old haunts and joined our u3a.

For a poem over 700 years old, Dante's *Inferno* remains a fresh and lively story, with a series of encounters with a wide variety of damned souls, punctuated by the ups and downs of Dante's relationship with his guide, Virgil. Robert-Louis has put forward an idea for a new group for discussion and setting the group one or two cantos for each session, to go slowly go through the poem, watching the drama, and appreciating the poetic imagery and narrative inventiveness. There will inevitably be discussions about the moral and psychological insights in a poem that does not tell us what hell will be like for sinners after death, but that offers us images of what we become when in everyday life we choose self-centred acts that destroy community. If you are interested in joining Robert-Louis, please contact Lidia on the email address above.

And sadly, a Group closing:

Stretch and Relax Group

We were all very sad to hear that the Stretch and Relax Group has had to call it a day. Chris Fitzpatrick started it 13 years ago and was joined by Nancy Taylor to co-run it. The sessions have always been so very sensitively handled so that members could exercise at their level and those who were not able to stretch out on the floor could sit on chairs and join in as far as they were able to. They will be sorely missed.

I know that members would really love to have some other form of exercise group as we don't have a lot to offer now apart from line dancing, so if there are any members who could start an exercise group up, then I know it would prove to be very popular and in great demand! Do please get in touch with Lidia.

Flower Arranging Group

We met again in September, after a two month break, as in July we had had an afternoon tea, and we didn't meet in August. All members were supplied with the same style silver container. These had been used for wedding flowers and the challenge was to produce an arrangement of choice. It was amazing to see the variety of arrangement but all in the same type of container.

We meet on the third Tuesday of the month at 1.45pm in the Joan Strong Centre in Oundle and have space for more members, so if you are interested, please contact us via the Flower Arranging Group's link on the new website.



October's Quiz

Part One: Jumbled up Autumn

Can you unscramble these words associated with Autumn?

1. Ugy Wefask
2. Senrock
3. Finrobe
4. Eatherbin
5. Mippunk Vicrang
6. Thervas Omno
7. Bremamencer Dunsay
8. Nautalum Exquoin
9. Lawhenole
10. Raplnk

Part Two: Autumn Trivia

1. What causes the change from Summer to Autumn?
2. Hedgehogs will now be fattening up as they prepare to hibernate for the winter. What is the name for a group of hedgehogs?
3. What British garden bird is known for its 'Autumn Song'?
4. Squirrels, Jays and Nuthatches are known for creating caches of food in the autumn, but which other garden bird also stores food?
5. The berries of the Mountain Ash tree are a favourite food of Waxwings; by what other name is this tree known?
6. Which celebration is influenced by the Celtic autumn festival, Samhain?
7. A spectacular sight at this time of year, a Murmuration is a huge, swirling cloud formed of what type of bird flying together?
8. The annual World Conker Championships is normally held on the second Sunday of October in Northamptonshire. According to records, where did the first game of conkers take place?
9. What is the official end of Autumn?
10. Which English Romantic poet composed "*To Autumn*" after a walk near Winchester one autumnal evening?

Answers to September's Quiz:

Part one: Kamala Harris is the Democratic Party's presidential nominee in the 2024 USA Presidential election – can you identify these other influential women?

1. To whom is Shakespeare referring? "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety" **Cleopatra.**
2. She was a gifted mathematician and is considered to be the first computer programmer. **Ada Lovelace.**
3. Born in Albania, she was a nun who founded the Missionaries of Charity in India. **Mother Teresa.**
4. Russia's longest-ruling female leader. **Catherine the Great.**
5. The Victorian Quaker who was known as the "Angel of Prisons". **Elizabeth Fry.**
6. The first female head of government in the world. **Sirimavo Bandaranaike.**
7. The world's youngest Nobel Peace Prize recipient. **Malala Yousafzai.**
8. Warrior queen of the ancient Iceni people. **Boudicca.**
9. Pioneer of the family planning movement. **Marie Stopes.**
10. The longest-serving British prime minister of the 20th century. **Margaret Thatcher.**

Part Two: What do you know about the Paralympics?

1. Which English village is seen as the birthplace of the Paralympic movement? **Stoke Mandeville**
2. The first Paralympic Games were held in 1960, six days after the close of the Olympics – in which city? **Rome.**
3. Rather than the five rings of the Olympics, the Paralympic symbol features how many crescent-shaped curves called agitos? **Three crescent-shaped curves or agitos.**
4. Due to its chair-knocking intensity, what was wheelchair rugby initially called? **Murderball.**
5. In which sport would you get a person called a tapper? **Swimming** . (tappers let visually impaired swimmers know when they are approaching the end of the pool)
6. Boccia is a ball sport related to which sport? **Petanque or boules.**
7. Whose fifth and last Paralympic Games were in 2004 where she won two gold medals in wheelchair racing in the 100m and 400m? **Tanni Grey-Thompson.** (In total in her Paralympic career Tanni's won 16 medals – eleven gold, four silver and a bronze.)
8. Which sport was invented in 1976 by Brad Parks, as a recreational therapy after he was injured while skiing? **Wheelchair tennis.**
9. Which city was first to host the Summer Paralympics twice? **Tokyo.** (1964 and 2021)
10. In Tokyo 2021 in which position did Great Britain come in the overall medal table? **Second.** (China came first, the USA third)