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# NEWSLETTER for Oundle & District

Edition Number 194  
December 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](mailto:oundleu3achairman@gmail.com)  
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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



When do **you** feel that Christmas has arrived, bearing in mind that shops and the media seem to advertise everything about this season earlier and earlier these days? Is it when you put the tree up? When you receive your first Christmas card or hear the first carol? For me, it is the taste of that first mince pie – usually at the start of December, although this year I tasted my first one early in November.

I love the fruit and spices and melt-in-the-mouth pastry although, of course, the first mince pies contained minced meat as well as chopped fruit – hence the name. Henry V had mince pies at his coronation and, in Tudor times, the pies were not round, but rectangular like a manger and often had a baby Jesus on top! We have to thank the Victorians for making them a sweet, fruity treat.

So, when do **you** start your preparations for Christmas? For some of you I imagine that it will be early on and that you have bought and wrapped presents, your cake and pudding are already made (or ordered), your decorations are up and you know exactly what is happening each day of the festive period.

Or, are you a last-minute shopper and preparer for the big day? Do you like to be more spontaneous? Or are you a 'Bah, humbug' sort? Sometimes, by the time Christmas actually arrives, we are worn to a frazzle as there seems to be so much going on in the run up to the big day and it has suddenly crept up on us.

I love the Christmas period so I definitely fall into the 'start early' category, although getting my family to give hints about presents is always tricky!

I am sure some u3a Groups will be having special Christmas-themed meetings over the next few weeks, so please remember to send in an article and some photos; remember it isn't the Group Leader's job to do this!

I know that those of you who are entertaining us at the Christmas Extravaganza next week are busy practising and we are looking forward to watching and hearing the fruits of your labours; thank you in advance. There are still a few tickets left, so please contact Barbara Ding if you find you can now attend.

Wherever and however you spend Christmas and New Year, I do hope that you are able to relax and enjoy the company of friends or family – or just the television!

*Happy Christmas,*

*Gill*

MONDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

Our DIY  
**Christmas Extravaganza**

Queen Victoria Hall,  
Oundle

Doors open at 2.00pm  
for mulled wine and mince  
pies

MONDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY  
2025

**PC Joanne Barlow**

And her talk will be on

**Scams, frauds and  
cyber awareness**

Queen Victoria Hall,  
Oundle

Doors open at 2.00pm  
for tea/coffee and  
biscuits



## MONTHLY MEETINGS

It was very appropriate that our speaker on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November (Remembrance Day) was Helen Frost, whose subject was 'Keeping Faith at the Front in the First World War'. Although it was her first visit to Oundle u3a, Helen has spoken in the town before, and was pleased to see some familiar faces as well as meeting our many members on that day. Her talk was billed as 'fascinating, thought-provoking, inspiring, funny and very moving' and it did not disappoint. The focus was on the idea that some people had faith, and some did not, and also drew attention to the many different faiths and nationalities of the people who served. Her Power Point skills made this a memorable event, as Helen provided images and true stories and first-hand accounts of acts of kindness in the terrible years of war. Her book '*Voices from the Great War Women's Land Army*' is about to be published.



### December 9<sup>th</sup> sees the return of The Oundle and District u3a DIY Christmas Extravaganza

After the resounding success of our Christmas 2023 DIY meeting, we just have to do it again! Once more we will be able to see our multi-talented members performing songs, plays, readings and tunes (and anything else they are willing to do) for our delectation and delight on the afternoon of Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December. Doors at the Queen Victoria Hall will open as usual at 2.00pm with the fun due to end at 4.00pm.



Tickets (£2) for the Christmas Extravaganza can be bought on the door from

Barbara Ding, our Treasurer.



On **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025** our speaker will be PC Joanne Barlow of Northamptonshire Police. In her career she has been a uniformed officer on front line duty as well as being a detective working in CID, in a team investigating rape and

serious sexual assault, in the Domestic Abuse Unit and then the Serious and Complex Fraud Team. She now has the role of Fraud Protect and Prevent Officer. This is a very busy role covering the whole county, visiting vulnerable victims of high harm fraud, and also giving talks to groups like ours on how to keep safe from scammers and fraud. Her talk will be on Cyber/Fraud and will include how to keep safe on your landline, mobile phone and computer/laptop; how and to whom fraud should be reported; online account compromise and social engineering; password security and 2 step verification/2 factor authentication; how to keep safe shopping online. She will give an example of courier fraud and if time allows will talk about romance fraud and advice around rogue traders. Joanne will be accompanied by her Cyber counterpart, David Reed.

In advance of our talk in January's talk on '**Scams, frauds and cyber awareness**', Northamptonshire Police have asked us to send out the following information:

### Unexpected phone call?

The police and your bank will NEVER phone you to ask for your bank details, password, PIN or any bank cards.

The police and your bank will NEVER tell you to transfer money to a 'safe' account or withdraw cash on their behalf.

Criminals can spoof the phone number they are calling from so the one that is shown on your phone matches a real number used by your bank or other trusted organisation.

Your phone, Internet, computer company and other genuine organisations will never call or message you unexpectedly to get you to share any code that you've received or that appears on your device, even if they claim to have sent it. **If you receive a similar call just hang-up.** Then wait a few minutes to ensure the line has cleared before calling the police on 101, or 999 in an emergency.

**If you have provided any details to the caller, you should notify your bank as soon as possible by calling 159.**

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



## Reminder of our Special General Meeting

At the start of our Christmas Extravaganza on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024 we will hold a very brief Special General Meeting at 2.20pm to vote on a small, but significant, change to our Constitution.

The Clause to be amended is **Part II 16.(8)**:

*"No-one may hold any specific officer position or be an ordinary (non-officer) trustee for a continuous period in excess of 3 years without an interval of at least 1 year between the periods of service."*

To be changed to:

*"No-one may hold a specific officer position or be an ordinary (non-officer) trustee for more than five years. However, this may be extended to ensure a smooth transition of responsibilities."*

The Third Age Trust has given us written permission to hold a vote on this change, which needs to be passed by a simple majority, providing the meeting is quorate. All Members are entitled to vote; this will be by show of hands.



### Renewing Your Membership for 2025

**Barbara Ding**

Your annual subscription is due for renewal on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025. The subs for 2025 are £16.00 (or £12.00 for Associate Members who pay the full subscription at another u3a). If you want to renew and you're unable to pay by BACS or Standing Order, please contact me by email on [oundleu3atreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:oundleu3atreasurer@gmail.com)

## Theatre and Outings



The take-up from Members for *Blood Brothers* on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March has been very slow. We need to make a definite decision on whether to cancel at the start of January so, if you would like to go, please get in touch with Sandra (01832 273891) or me ([oundleu3achairman@gmail.com](mailto:oundleu3achairman@gmail.com)) without delay!

## Our u3a President

As many of you will know, it was Ann Holland's idea, along with Margaret Spotswood and Brenda Berry, to set up a u3a back in 2008 and subsequently she became our President. Over the years, she has welcomed Members to our AGMs, our Christmas meetings and other events.

She has now moved to Bournemouth to be close to her family.

On behalf of us all, the Committee has sent a card and a bouquet of flowers to thank her for all she did for our u3a and to wish her well.

## TAT Elections

Last month I explained that the TAT AGM had voted in favour of a new structure. Nominations are now open for the Board and the Council.

Iain Cassidy, the new CEO, writes:

'The u3a is moving to a new governance structure with a smaller Board, that will focus primarily on the governance of the Third Age Trust, and a new Council that will represent the voice of u3as. Nominations are open now for both Trustees of the Board and Council members. This is an exciting change that gives u3a members more of a voice than ever before. Details of each role and nomination forms can be found on the election page of the u3a website. The deadline for nominations is **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024.**'



## Information from our Committee Meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> November

Thanks were expressed to Peg Quiddington, who has taken over the Tea Rota for the monthly meetings in 2025.

The required notice about the Special General Meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> December has been sent to all Members. An update was given on arrangements for the December monthly meeting.

Gill Potts gave an update on the recent Network and East Midlands Regional Trustee Support Meetings. We reviewed the Group Leaders' meeting.

We agreed to 'inspect' QVH at the November monthly meeting so that Barbara could return our comments in a survey to the Friends of QVH.

Gill Potts confirmed that a card and flowers have been sent to Ann Holland.

*Individual reports from Committee members since the last meeting:*

**Chairman (Gill Potts):** contacted OTC to commend them on the new lighting in QVH; met to sort details for the December meeting and contacted all performers; attended the TAT AGM and the East Midlands Regional Trustee Support meeting, both online; met Lidia about the forthcoming GLs' meeting.

**Business Secretary (Jane Hayward):** wrote and circulated previous Minutes; contacted TAT re: changes to our Constitution; posted our new URL on the u3a Portal (for the new website).

**Treasurer (Barbara Ding):** paid expenses and invoices to date; dealt with an insurance query; ordered a new stock of Membership cards; attended a Network Link meeting online; induction for our new Trustees; preparation for end of year returns.

**Programme Secretary (Carolyn Traynor):** communications with Speakers; finalised programme for 2025; prepared publicity information for the January talk.

**Membership Secretary (Barbara Bett):** registering new Members – a total of 60 so far this year.

**Group Co-ordinator (Lidia Douglas):** preparation for and follow up work from the Group Leaders' meeting.

**Theatre and Outings (Gill Potts):** printed tickets for the Hallé concert; our next meeting is 12<sup>th</sup> November.

**Publicity (Gill Potts):** meeting with Jane Fenton on 8<sup>th</sup> November to discuss handing over this role.



Newsletter.

We are not doing a quiz in the Newsletter as at the Christmas Extravaganza, copies of the December Quiz will be available for you to take home, just in case you have a few minutes to spare to exercise your brains. However, after the meeting, our Webmaster will put the quiz on the website for all of those who didn't come to have a go. We will publish the answers on the website in January and if space allows, in the January Newsletter.

### Answers to November's quiz:

1. A coven; 2. Werewolf; 3. Noisy Ghost; 4. Black cats; 5. Macbeth; 6. Harry Houdini; 7. Australian; 8. A cauldron; 9. Ireland; 10. 0; 11. 2039; 12. A scythe; 13. Annabelle; 14. Samhainophobia; 15. Central America; 16. Romania; 17. 2003; 18. Mary Shelley; 19. Scorpio; 20. All Saint's Day; 21. Henry Selick; 22. Ancient Rome; 23. Lancaster; 24. Alabama; 25. Florist; 26. Mexico; 27. Bran Castle (in Romania); 28. Turnips.



### SPOTLIGHT ON MILITARY HISTORY 1 – Talk at the Library – Jane Morris



It can't have passed anyone by that this June was the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the D-Day Landings in Normandy, codenamed Operation Overlord. The Oundle Yarnbombers contributed to the Longest Yarn display, now making its way round the world, and Oundle u3a's own Military History Group, aka the Oundle History Boys, played their part in the commemorations. They gave a presentation at the recently reopened library, delving into the lesser known deception and subterfuge behind the plans which were crucial to its success.

As a mere wife of a keen military historian, I had heard of and read about Operation Mincemeat, critical in the success of the invasion of Sicily. However, plans such as Fortitude North, Fortitude South, Grafham, Skye, Royal Flush, Glimmer and Ironside were all new to me. After Graham's scene setting, George took us into the world of spies and double agents. They were coordinated by the very cleverly named Twenty Committee (XX in Roman numbers = double cross). One such double agent, a Spanish agent codenamed Garbo, was awarded both the Iron Cross, 2<sup>nd</sup> Class, by the Germans as well as an MBE by the grateful British government.

Blyth focused on phoney plans for invasions in Pas de Calais and Norway and the creation of the imaginary First United States Army Group, centred around Kent. The German reconnaissance planes were allowed to fly over Kent where they could spot dummy tanks and landing craft made out of rubber and light wood. They were prevented from flying further west where the real invasion force was assembling.

Chris then explained how the Allies had tried but failed to take a port at Dieppe and consequently recognised the need to bring a port with them. This was the Mulberry Harbour, never before attempted and a complete surprise to the Germans when it was erected within a day on D-Day. It had taken over seven years to build a harbour at Dover.

During a tea, coffee and cake break, the screen was left with an image of a man everyone was convinced was Monty. How wrong we all were! It was in fact Meyrick Edward Clifton James, an actor and soldier, with a striking resemblance to Field Marshal Montgomery. He put in an appearance in Egypt and Gibraltar in June 1944, reinforcing the misconception that nothing was going to happen soon on the Channel coast.

These deception plans were critical to the success of D-Day as the Germans believed that the main attack would be in the Pas de Calais. But luck was also on the Allies side. Rommel, because he believed the invasion would be in July, was home in Germany and the top German generals were involved in simulated war game planning in central France. Hitler was not woken up till the invasion was well under way. So no-one was available to pull in reinforcements when the Normandy landings began.

Graham wound up the session with comparisons of the numbers of forces and equipment on both sides on June 6<sup>th</sup> 1944, showing that the subterfuge had succeeded. Not only were the deception plans believed by the Germans but, more importantly, they had been acted upon.

The Military History 1 Group meets once a month but currently has no vacancies for new members. A 2<sup>nd</sup> group, Military History 2, has long been established and does have spaces – see the website for more information and to contact the group leader.



## SPOTLIGHT ON WEDNESDAY WALKERS

Jenny Munro, Group Leader

During the autumn months the Wednesday Walkers enjoyed some beautiful scenery on local routes, usually in bright conditions – always a bonus. We have been going for two years now, meeting at 10.00am on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month, and walking 5–6 miles. Where possible we include a short coffee stop en route, normally finishing the walk by about 12.30.

The routes start within an 10-mile radius of Oundle, are varied and avoid roads as much as possible, following footpaths, field tracks and quiet lanes, so there may be stiles, or a little unavoidable mud.

Walking is enjoyable, sociable and excellent exercise, and potential new members are welcome to try a walk before deciding whether to join the group.



## SPOTLIGHT ON LOCAL HISTORY GROUP 1 Barrie Harbott

### FROM BAKEHOUSE TO SURGERY VIA CHAPELS, PUBS AND PARLOURS

#### PLACES OF WORSHIP IN OUNDLE 8<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY TO PRESENT DAY



In 2024 members of the **Oundle u3a Local History Group 1** continued exploring aspects of Oundle's history, and began a project attempting to identify Christian places of worship in Oundle from the arrival of Christianity to the present day.

Our findings are set out in chronological order, starting with places used by those who followed the Roman Christian form of worship. Places used after the Reformation, are in alphabetical order by denomination.

Numbers in the text refer to the numbers on the accompanying map.

A Glossary of Terms used in the text is at the end of the paper.

Illustrations can be found in the Gallery.

We are producing the output as a booklet 'in-house'.

Copies will be available at gatherings, for donations to the u3a.

**THE FLOWER ARRANGING GROUP** do not meet in December. For our year-end meeting in November we produced a variety of Christmas arrangements on spheres.

Our first meeting next year is on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January at 1.45pm in the Joan Strong Centre in Oundle. New members welcome. No floristry skills needed.

