

# NEWSLETTER for OUNDLE & DISTRICT

Edition Number 201  
July 2025

If you would like to find out more about Oundle & District u3a,  
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Registered Charity Number 1183800

## *In this edition*

- Monthly Meeting news
- General Information
- News from the Groups
- And more

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I met a lady at a party recently who told me that she has started a new routine. She goes out every day and takes a photograph. Her self-imposed rules are that there are no people as the main feature, (or must be incidental), no food as she is a professional cook, and no pets. If she is out for the day, it might be a photo of a lovely view or a shop front or a church. If she has a day at home, it might be a lovely flower from her garden or a local view. She did say that sometimes she gets almost to the end of the day before she remembers that she needs a 'today photo'. She then puts the photos in a lovely book she bought specially and she writes about each day, with the photos as the stimulus for her writing.

This struck me as a really lovely idea. It is a positive act in that she has to go out looking for a subject, the result is something that makes her smile, it makes her put pen to paper and be creative *and* she has something to treasure, with all of the memories to look back on later!

By coincidence, the u3a Matters magazine arrived just after I had written this. It contains an article about how to improve your photography skills – see page 26.

Do you have a daily routine which culminates in a 'finished product'? I know many of you write diaries and have done so for many years. They are always fascinating to look back on. I have kept a diary since I was a teenager, just a few sentences every day but it is a great way of remembering what you did and when. I often refer back to past years to compare or to check on things.

By the time you read this, I will be on holiday and, of course, taking lots of photos! Hopefully I will enjoy new experiences, visiting places I have never visited before, trying food I have never eaten before and most of all enjoying a change of pace.

Wherever you are this month – home or away – enjoy yourself!

*Gill*

## MONDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> JULY

Our Speaker is

**Philip Caine**

and his talk will be

**"Barrow to Baghdad and  
back"**

Doors open at 2.00pm  
for tea/coffee and  
biscuits

## MONDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST

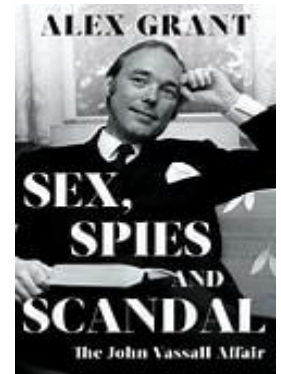
**A Performance by  
Paul Rogers and  
Yasmin Bradley of  
Frumenty**

Queen Victoria Hall,  
Oundle

Doors open at 2.00pm  
for tea/coffee and  
biscuits

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

At our June meeting, our speaker, Alex Grant, gave us much to think about during his talk on '*Sex, Spies and Scandal – the John Vassall Affair*'. Like the vast majority of the audience I knew nothing of the scandal which hit the headlines big-time in 1962 when Vassall was exposed after spying for the KGB for seven years. Times were very different in those days when homosexual practices were illegal and Vassall was a gay man who wished to be perceived as somewhat grander than he actually was. This hubris led to him making some rather naive decisions which allowed him to be blackmailed into spying for the KGB. I have to say that despite his actions, I ended up having some sympathy for the man, who was not ideologically driven. He appeared to be a rather hapless individual who did the very least he could get away with in order to survive. These days, when men and women can be openly gay without fear of imprisonment or being pilloried by the press, it simply would not have happened. The scandal highlighted many things from that time – not least the workings of the class system, the rights of members of the LGBTQ+ community, the role of the press and the complacency of the security services...some things have definitely improved! – Gill Phillips



For our meeting on **Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July** we welcome **Philip Caine** with his talk "**Barrow to Baghdad and back**". As well as being a speaker and raconteur, Philip is the author of the Jack Castle series of fictitious adventure thrillers. Hailing from Barrow-in-Furness, Philip started out in the hotel business, and then began an international career in the oil business. The end of the Iraq War in 2003 took him to Baghdad, where he directed the operations and project management of multiple accommodation bases for the American Coalition. Signing up for an original six month contract, Philip ended up working on the project for almost seven years. Now in retirement back home, Philip has recently released a new detective series featuring a brand new character, Shackleton Blister.

As is the tradition, our August meeting on **Monday 11<sup>th</sup> August**, will be something a little different. We are delighted to have a real treat in store with a performance by **Paul Rogers and Yasmin Bradley** of **Frumenty**, a folk band of which they are founder members, having played with the iconic *Empty Pocket*. They have performed internationally in Chicago and Southern Ireland, and Yasmin in Germany with an earlier line up. Both performers have deep roots in Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire, from which they draw on extensively for their work: singing, performing and discovering our extraordinary local history. Another inspiration is Northamptonshire poet and folk song collector, John Clare, whose themes still resonate today. We are looking forward to an afternoon of uplifting music, harmonies and storytelling.



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

### Research Project

We have been asked by the University of Oxford to let you know about a study being done into the health and wellbeing of adults who grew up in foster or residential care.

'Research has shown that care-experienced adults face a greater risk of negative health outcomes compared to the general population.

Researchers, at the University of Oxford, are holding focus groups to understand the health and wellbeing concerns of older care-experienced adults and explore the types of support they would like to receive from health and social care services.'

If you, or someone you know, would like to find out more, please contact Jon on [Jonathan.Taylor@ndph.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Jonathan.Taylor@ndph.ox.ac.uk) or 01865 617912.

## Information from our Committee meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> June

The AGM will now take place on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June.

The new Recruitment leaflets have been printed and are ready for distribution to the usual local shops and businesses. It was agreed that Members be asked at the June monthly meeting for help in distributing to village halls or churches.

Next year, several Committee members will be standing down from the Committee and certain posts will be vacant. The issue of committee roles will therefore be discussed at the next meeting.

Barbara Ding had met again with David Tinsley to progress the handover of the Treasurer role.

Committee members reported on their work since the previous meeting.

The next meeting is on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> August.

## Northants Network

The u3a Northants Network met on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> June. Carolyn Traynor and Gill Potts represented our u3a. Two Forums were held: one for Chairs and one for Programme Secretaries.

Chairs discussed the problems of recruiting members to the committee and also how to promote our u3as to the wider public.

Programme Secretaries shared information about recent and future speakers.

The next meeting is on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October.

## AGM

The AGM took place, at the second attempt, on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June. David Tinsley was elected as Treasurer and Jane Fenton was formally elected to the Committee. I gave notice that this year will be my last year as Chairman. Next year, Barbara Bett will also be stepping down and her role as Membership Secretary will be taken by Carolyn Traynor. Gill Phillips will also retire from the Committee next year. So, in 2026 we will need a new Chairman, a Programme Secretary and a Web Manager! Please think about these important roles. Talk to members of your Interest Groups about the need for succession and let's all make an effort to fill these gaps so that our u3a can continue!

## u3a Member Podcast!

Madeleine Sewter, who many of you know, has recently taken part in a podcast for Wells Theatre in Norfolk, recording one of her 'Gladys' monologues. If you would like to listen to it, google 'Maltings Matters' and you will find the buzzsprout website. Go to No. 14, where you can also hear an interview with Madeleine. Congratulations, Madeleine. Is she the first of our Members to do a podcast?

## Thought provoking –

At a recent Creative Writing Group meeting Jill Rundle gave her Group the title "u3a" as a 5 minute exercise and this is what Sue Hale wrote:

### *Unexpected u3a consequences*

It is astonishing how many groups there are in the u3a. Almost every interest is catered for and it is so easy to join as many groups as you possibly can. I belong to a Ukelele Group that is a wonderful mix of people of varying ages and interests. We have enormous fun – and I meet one of the gentlemen members regularly on a Sunday morning, when I go swimming with my son. We usually use the sauna at the same time, and sitting in our swimming costumes talking about ukeleles is something I never expected to do!

The u3a can start off all sorts of unique and different things.

## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

Lidia Douglas [groupscoordinatoroundleu3a@gmail.com](mailto:groupscoordinatoroundleu3a@gmail.com)

If you have any ideas for new Groups or any spaces in your Groups, please let Lidia know so that she can put a few words in the newsletter.

## SPOTLIGHT ON BOOK GROUP 3

Jane Fenton

Our book group meets once a month at different members' houses to discuss a work that has been proposed by that member and to indulge in plenty of chat, tea and biscuits.

Twice a year we submit our suggestions for books we'd like to feature to our leader, Carew Treffgarne. Everyone puts forward two or three suggestions and Carew will select what she thinks will make an interesting and wide ranging reading list for the next few months.

Recent books have included David Nicholls *You are Here* – a fiction best seller from 2024; Eleanor Catton *The Luminaries* – a Booker prize winner from the historical fiction genre; Clive Myrie's family history *Everything is Everything* and Jon Ronson's book *So You've Been Publicly Shamed*, which explores the concept of public shaming over the years.

Everyone has different ideas about the books we read, and to discuss those ideas and to hear alternative interpretations of what we have read is what makes the sessions fascinating. It's also a great chance to read books that are outside our comfort zone; quite often the list includes books that I would never have approached if left to my own devices – but some of them have left a great impression on me and so I am glad that they have been suggested.

We do have space for new members should anyone wish to join. We can guarantee you'll be warmly welcomed! If you would like to become part of our group, please contact Carew via the link on our website.

## SPOTLIGHT ON THE FLOWER ARRANGING GROUP

Sue Brewer

We all attempted a monochrome arrangement in a container of our choice, with all the usual varied but beautiful results. Some were made with shop bought flowers and some with flowers picked from our gardens.

We are a small friendly group and would love to welcome anyone who would like to join us. No experience necessary. We won't be meeting in August and have an afternoon get together at a garden centre in July.



## QUIZZES 'N' PUZZLES

Steph Tewson and Jane Morris



We meet every third Thursday of the month at 2.00pm in members' houses and start with a quiz that has been devised by one of the group. We then move on to play various games and puzzles. Paula Shaw introduced us to Newmarket the last time we met and this time Jane Fenton won the pot! Pity it was only pretend chips! We then finished the afternoon with a game of Quiddler. Much laughter was had. If you would like to join us, please contact us via the link on our website.

*Photo by Anne Brown*

### SPOTLIGHT ON GARDEN GROUP 3

Our garden outing for June was a visit to Stoke Albany House. The house is privately owned and is Grade 2 listed. It was built in 1835 for the Humphrey family and had minor modifications in 1858, and the property features historical architectural elements like its main staircase and colonnade. However, the house isn't open to the public, but every year the owners open up the gardens in June and July under the National Garden Scheme.



The traditional garden has been brought up to date in a perfect English setting, situated in a picturesque landscape. There is a beautiful long herbaceous border which is the owner's and their gardener's pride and joy. The large lawn is kept looking pristine by robotic lawn mowers.



There are ten acres in all to explore and the group were very pleased to be able to walk through the beautiful woodland to keep out of the very hot sun.



## SPOTLIGHT ON THE UKELELE GROUP

Jane Morris and Sue Hales

The Oundle & District u3a Ukulele Group was busy in June, playing in St Peters Church in Oundle at the Holiday at Home event and at Warmington's Garden Party. The group has adopted the name "The Jumping Fleas" and Betty, the group leader, opened the performance with an explanation for the name. Back in the 1880s, Portuguese immigrants introduced the stringed instrument to the Hawaiian islands. The Portuguese called it a machete but the Hawaiians gave it the name ukulele because of the dexterity of the player's fingers and that translates as jumping flea.

The Holiday at Home is an annual event which has grown out of the fortnightly Tuesday Club at St Peters. Seniors from Oundle and the surrounding villages are invited to travel to an overseas destination – this year Amsterdam. The church was decorated with bunting to reflect the Netherlands flag and guests enjoyed a morning of crafts and games. After lunch the Jumping Fleas provided entertainment. They set the scene with their opening numbers Summer Holiday and Leaving on a Jet Plane, followed by some well-known songs with a Dutch theme – *Tulips from Amsterdam*, *Tiptoe through the Tulips*, *Maid of Amsterdam* and *A Windmill in Old Amsterdam*. They rounded off the session with songs from WW1 and WW2, a reflection on D Day, VE Day and VJ Day.

Later that week they were called upon again to play at Warmington's Garden Party in Patrick and Penny Morgan's beautiful garden. And what a wonderful afternoon it turned out to be. Surrounded by a variety of super stalls, including tombola, a bar, food, strawberries, bat the rat, face painting and cakes, they entertained a large crowd with over a dozen ukelele tunes. People joined in and a really happy afternoon was had by all. It was amazing that so many people attended to support Warmington Church.





# JULY'S QUIZ

## Part One: The answers are quite colourful; and is there a connection?

1. Mick Hucknall is the lead singer of which band, formed in the 1980s?
2. How is the singer Alecia Beth Moore–Hartbetter known?
3. What is the current reigning house of the Netherlands?
4. Who are the four Bucket (Bouquet) sisters in *Keeping up Appearances*?
5. What is the Australian animated TV series for preschool children featuring puppies?
6. Minus the "d" who is the architect who designed Covent Garden?
7. The opening lines to which 60s' song by Donovan are "I'm just mad about Saffron".
8. What is the name of the room where performers wait when they are not needed on stage or on camera?
9. Who is the principal character of the comic strip *Peanuts*?
10. Can you find the link between these answers? Beware, there are two odd ones out – can you identify them?

## Part Two: It's all about July

1. In July 1730 one of Britain's best known pottery designers was born in Burslem. Name him.
2. July 1st is a national holiday in this Commonwealth country as it commemorates the confederation of a number of provinces in 1867. What is the country?
3. Founded by General William Booth in July 1865 in London, what is the organisation called?
4. In July 1976, Israeli commandoes rescued 103 hostages from a plane at which airport in Africa?
5. Jackie Kennedy who later became Jackie Onassis following the assassination of her husband was born in July 1929. What was her maiden name?
6. On the 4th July the Continental Congress approved The Declaration of Independence. What was the year?
7. In 1885 the first successful anti-rabies inoculation was administered, by whom?
8. She was the first female aviator to fly solo across the Atlantic and disappeared in July 1937 whilst flying over the Pacific. What was her name?
9. July 14<sup>th</sup> is a national holiday in France as it commemorates which event from 1789?
10. In July 1606 the Dutch painter known for his work *'Militia Company of District II under the Command of Captain Frans Banninck Cocq'* (but better known as *The Night Watch*), was born in Leiden. What was his name?

## Answers to June's Quiz:

**Part One:** 1. Sassoon; 2. Runcible spoon; 3. Bassoon; 4. Blue Moon; 5. Prune; 6. Broon; 7. Brigadoon; 8. Croon; 9. Monsoon; 10. Maroon; 11. Platoon; 12. Macaroon.

**Part Two:** 1. Horse Guards Parade; 2. Gemini (until June 20) and Cancer (June 21 onwards); 3. Pearl, alexandrite or moonstone (it seems to have three!); 4. *The Devil Wears Prada*; 5. 1985; 6. Les Miserables; 7. 20<sup>th</sup>, or 21<sup>st</sup>, or 22<sup>nd</sup>; 8. Tiananmen Square, Beijing, China (1989); 9. Terry Scott; 10. *Carousel*; 11. Glastonbury Festival; 12. Normandy beach landings.