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NEWSLETTER for OUNDLE & DISTRICT

Edition Number 212
June 2026

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

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



Hello, and welcome to my first u3a Newsletter. It's a real pleasure to be your new Chairman and, together with the new Committee, I'm looking forward to supporting all of you. I'm also very grateful to my predecessor, Gill, and her Committee for handing over the u3a in such good health.

My wife and I came to Oundle 40 years ago and raised our two sons here, so this town has been home to us for a long time. A great deal has changed over those years, but what hasn't changed is Oundle's warmth, charm, and strong sense of community.

That is very much what I hope for the u3a going forward; to build on strong foundations, adapt where needed, and keep our organisation lively, welcoming, and relevant. None of this would be possible without our Committee members and Group Leaders, who give so generously of their time, energy, and creativity.

For many of you, your group leader is the face of the u3a, organising meetings and helping groups flourish. They really are the heartbeat of the organisation, and I'm looking forward to meeting them all in August at the Open Day. In the meantime, please do share your feedback with them so we can better understand what you would like more of, less of, and how we can support you.

Finally, I would like to thank my predecessor and those leaving the Committee for their hard work, comprehensive handover, and many years of service. Their contribution has been greatly valued, and is much appreciated.

Mark

MONDAY 8th JUNE

Neil Hanson

His talk is called

"Inn and Out at the Top"

about his time running the
highest inn in Britain

Queen Victoria Hall,
Oundle

Doors open at 2.00pm
for tea/coffee and biscuits

MONDAY 13th JULY

Dave Pinion

**"In the wake of Ernest
Shackleton"**

Following Dave's
extraordinary journey
through Antarctica

Doors open at 2.00pm
for tea/coffee and biscuits

Annual General Meeting held on 11 May 2026

The Annual General Meeting took place on 11 May in the Queen Victoria Hall. Three members of the Committee were stepping down including the Chairman, Gill Potts. Mark Quigley was elected as the new Chairman and three new members were elected to various posts (see below for profiles).



CHRIS WILKIN – Programme Secretary

'I moved to Oundle from Sandy, Bedfordshire in October 2008, and joined the town's u3a about a month after it was created. I led the Sunday Lunch Bunch for 12 years, but sadly had to give it up last December because of a recent, more pressing commitment. I also led the Board Game group for a short while.

The u3a group I am presently involved with is Creative Writing, which I have contributed to since 2011. The other groups I have dabbled in over the years are Philosophy, a Book group, Ukulele group, Chinwaggers and the Quiz group.'



PATRICIA SHINGLES – Joint Webmaster

'I joined the u3a quite by accident one Monday afternoon when I gate-crashed the Card-making group by mistake. Luckily, they invited me to stay and join in, provided I become a member of the u3a! I'm very glad I did, and since that fateful day I've joined the Recorder, Ukelele and Singing groups.

I'm no longer a member of the Card-making group which lured me in - I'd recently retired from my role as a nursery teacher and I was missing playing with the glue, but I think I'm over that now!'



DAVID JOHNSTON – Joint Webmaster

'We recently moved from the North Cotswolds and I have enjoyed the presentations in the QVH each month. We are slowly getting to know people. I hope to join the Philosophy and Music Appreciation groups. U3a is a good organisation and I like being involved with it.'

MONTHLY MEETINGS



The speaker for our May meeting was Steve Dimmer who gave a very thorough and interesting insight into the partnership between Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein. The talk took us back to the wonderful poignant music they brought us in the five most popular films of the 1950s and '60s.

Richard Rodgers was born in 1902 and Oscar Hammerstein in 1895, and between them they created five classic musicals: Oklahoma, their first musical in 1955; both Carousel and The King and I were released in 1956; and South Pacific in 1958. The Sound of Music was their last film which was released in 1965, and the talk opened with a screening of the title song, sung by Julie Andrews.

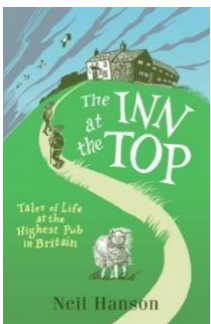
Apart from those sensational hit musicals, they also created other lesser well-known works including Allegro, about a doctor; Pipe Dream, about a brothel, which ran for 245 performances; Me and Juliet, for only 57 performances; and the Flower Drum Song in 1957, which had an all-Asian cast. Between them Rodgers and Hammerstein won numerous awards for their outstanding work.

Hammerstein had a short collaboration with Jerome Kern and together they wrote the words and music for Showboat. An excerpt of Ol' Man River was included as an example of the work.

Hammerstein was sensitive to racism, religion and different cultures and introduced the topics in many of his works.

Rodgers also worked with Larry Hart for a short while and they produced Pal Joey from which the song Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered came.

A packed Victoria Hall was treated to a truly nostalgic afternoon of beautiful songs from two of the best song writers of all time, from an era when songs had meaningful lyrics and memorable tunes. Those were the days my friends!



On **Monday 8th June 2026**, our speaker at the Monthly meeting will be **Neil Hanson**, an award-winning speaker, storyteller and successful author with 70 published books to his name. As well as his own much-acclaimed work, he is a ghost writer whose clients include household names. Based in Yorkshire, he is a regular speaker at u3as all over the country and also entertains audiences at every type of occasion in the UK and in Australia, New Zealand and the USA. His humorous talk **“Inn and Out at the Top”**, narrates the quirks and foibles, highs and lows of his time running the highest inn in Britain back in the 1970s and 1980s.



Next month on **Monday, 13th July 2026** Dave Pinion will be giving a talk entitled **“In the wake of Ernest Shackleton”** based on Dave's journeys following the Weddell Sea Party of Ernest Shackleton's disastrous expedition of 1914-17. They begin in South Georgia where they pay respects at Shackleton's resting place and then sail in the wake of the

Endurance past the South Sandwich Islands and deep into the Weddell Sea where the Endurance became trapped in ice. On the way Dave met with curious Emperor penguins, walked on icebergs, flew to the top of the Antarctic ice cap and sailed with humpback whales.

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



A quick note to remind you that **Chinwaggers** next meets on June 25th between 10.00am and noon in the Snug at the Talbot Hotel, Oundle.

NEWSLETTER EDITORS: oundleu3newslettereditors@gmail.com Please send us your articles as early as you can.

SPOTLIGHT ON GARDEN GROUP 2



On a bright sunny day our new group ventured out to Burwell on the edge of East Cambridgeshire to visit Isaacson's Gardens. Isaacson is a 14th century home, formerly a medieval lodging range, built of clunch, a type of soft limestone. Extensive Georgian modifications have disguised the 14C character however its garderobes still form part of its huge presence. The owner believes it may have served as a B&B for parliamentarians en-route to Ely.

Entering off the road between yew hedges, the beauty of the building overwhelms until your eye is drawn through a richly planted front garden, including topiary, into the side of the property admiring the auricula theatre on the way. The space is divided into lots of different 'rooms' where Mediterranean planting mixes with old English favourites – the rose and peony combinations will be something to behold in the coming months. Roses can be seen growing over structures, up into trees and through obelisks and arches. Unusual apples and a variety of old-fashioned and wall-trained fruits such as medlar, apricots and peaches are plentiful; a collection of epimediums; old-fashioned dianthus, vegetable beds and lots of quirky antique objects make it an incredible space to explore. Pride of place in the centre of the garden is a Cornus Florida tree which was starting to declare its colours – quite a sight to see.

Our eyes were constantly being drawn up to admire trees and features placed to enhance the view; refreshments provided by the owner gave us a bird's eye view to take in the glorious house in the sunshine whilst he shared its history.

We went on to discover a new plant nursery in Fordham and not many left empty handed!

Isaacson's is open for the NGS on Sunday, 7th June 2026.



Exterior from S.E.
BURWELL (s). Medieval lodging.

MATURE DRIVERS' EVENT

The Mature Drivers' Event is organised by Northamptonshire Safer Roads Alliance (NSRA) and takes place several times each year at various locations around Northamptonshire. As the previous County Contact for the Northamptonshire u3a Network, I was sent details of the Event, which I forwarded on to all our u3as. Now our new County Contact, Gill Potts, has that privilege.

I had always intended to go to one but didn't fancy going to Daventry or Towcester and was hoping they would do one closer to us and, earlier this year, it seemed they were going to hold one in Wellingborough, but before I could book, it was cancelled, so I was delighted to see they were holding one in Oundle last month.

They held two sessions; one in the morning and one in the afternoon and I went to the afternoon one. Several u3a members went to one or the other and all those I spoke to, found it very interesting. For those of us still driving, it is an important part of our everyday life and gives us the freedom to get out and about and not have to rely on others or public transport, although in time, all of us will have to face the inevitable, I am sure.

We were all given a "goody bag" which included an up-to-date Highway Code book as well as a gadget to be able to make sure you had enough tread on your tyres which doubled up as a window scraper and a few other bits and pieces. We were shown various videos of mistakes older people make and I have to say some of them were frightening.

You will have no doubt learned of the Government's decision to make everyone over 70 take a mandatory eye test at the DVLA's appointed optician. Personally, I think everyone who drives should take an eye test, but I was horrified to learn that there are a large number of elderly drivers who don't get their eyes checked every year. They are also going to put in place mandatory Driving Assessments to ensure we are all capable of handling a car etc. I suspect these will be a few years away and who knows, but NSRA are organising FREE individual hints and tips drives which you can book at the end of the session and which will be delivered by Northampton Advanced Motorists. Everyone who attended our session put their name down to go on one, as we all thought it would be interesting to see what a professional driver thought. It could be a wake-up call for some of us!

I would thoroughly recommend going on one of these Mature Drivers Events and there are a couple coming up in June in Corby. You can book your free tickets via Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/northants-mature-driver-roadshows>

Stephne Tewson



June's Quiz

Part One: Births and Deaths in June

1. Born on the 1st June, this RAF officer invented the turbo jet engine.
2. Born on the 8th June, this computer scientist invented the World Wide Web.
3. Died on the 9th June, this Victorian novelist adopted the pen name Boz.
4. Died on the 11th June, this American actor was born Marion Robert Morrison.
5. Born on the 14th June, this Argentinian major figure of the Cuban Revolution.
6. Born on the 17th June, this Russian composer was commissioned to write the music for ballets – *The Firebird*, *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring*.
7. Born on the 18th June, this musician co-wrote Mull of Kintyre.
8. Died on the 21st June, this king led England into the Hundred Years War.
9. Born on the 24th June, this Argentinian football player was named All Time Men's World Best Player in 2025.
10. Died on the 28th, he was the 4th president of the United States.

Part Two: It happened in June

1. The War of the Roses was ended when Lancastrian forces defeated Yorkist supporters in the final battle of the war. In which county did the final battle take place?
2. In this month in 1936, *Gone With the Wind* was first published. Who was the author?
3. In 1913, Emily Davison a women's suffrage activist was fatally injured. How?
4. In 1883 the train line, that is identified with intrigue and luxury travel, started operations. What is it called?
5. On 15th June 1215 which significant document was signed by King John limiting the power of the monarchy
6. In June 1949 George Orwell published his political novel of life under a totalitarian government. What was it called?
7. In 1862, in which war did General Stonewall Jackson conclude his Shenandoah Valley Campaign?
8. The first Boat race held on the Thames between Oxford and Cambridge took place in June of which year. Was it a) 1829 b) 1849 or c) 1869?
9. On her birthday, in 1942, Anne Frank began keeping a diary. How old was she?
10. In 1894 an international congress in Paris founded the International Olympic Committee to reinstate the ancient Olympic Games. Who led the committee?

Answers to May's Quiz: 1. Emerald; 2. May the 4th be with you; 3. Taurus; 4. May Day; 5. Lily of the Valley; 6. Cinco de Mayo; 7. Eta Aquariids; 8. Being lucky or blessed (Often cited in traditional lore); 9. Mother's Day; 10. William Shakespeare; 11. French Open; 12. Taurus (until May 20) and Gemini (May 21 onwards); 13. November; 14. Morris Dancing; 15. Anita Dobson; 16. Francisco Goya; 17. A clout (an old word for a piece of clothing); 18. Hawthorn; 19. On a cold and frosty morning; 20. Speedwell.