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NEWSLETTER for Oundle & District

Edition Number 215
September 2026

If you would like to find out more about Oundle & District u3a,
take a look at <https://oundleanddistrict.u3asite.uk>
or contact Chairman: chairmanu3aoundle@outlook.com
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Registered Charity Number **1183800**

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I'm delighted to say that the feedback I've received from the August open meeting was overwhelmingly positive and it was a great success. Thank you to everyone who attended, and the volunteers involved in making it happen. Already this year 48 new members have joined us, and later in the newsletter you can learn of two new groups starting up.

Our Group Coordinator, Lidia, and Membership Secretary, Carolyn, have just completed the difficult task of updating group membership details. With 75 groups and almost 600 members, keeping records current is a never-ending but essential job required by the national u3a for insurance and communication purposes. Please remember to notify Carolyn (membershipoundleu3a@outlook.com) if your contact details change, including address, phone or email. Similarly, can Group Leaders ensure that any changes to your groups are notified to Lidia (groupscoordinatoroundleu3a@gmail.com). It's a small thing to ask but makes a big difference.

Abbott House in Oundle, which cares for elderly people, has asked whether individuals or groups could spare time to entertain its residents. For example, one of our members runs a well-received hour-long poetry reading session every few months. If anyone thinks they can help, please email me (chairmanoundleu3a@outlook.com).

MONTHLY MEETINGS

MONDAY, 14TH SEPTEMBER

**The roles of a supporting
artist – TV/Film extra**

In a change to the advertised programme Rob Brewer will talk about his life as an extra in TV and films.

Doors open at 2.00 pm

MONDAY, 12TH OCTOBER

**You couldn't make it up –
The Life of a TV Reporter**

Bharat Patel will talk about the stories behind the headlines in his career as a TV reporter.

Doors open at 2pm

Mark

MONTHLY MEETINGS



U3A Open Day – Monday, 10 August

On Monday 10th August, our Monthly Meeting took the form of an Open Afternoon which served as a showcase for some of our many interest groups. The displays were varied: Antiques and Collectables, Tai Chi, Bridge, Creative Writing, Makers and Shakespeare to name but a few. Lidia, Interest Groups Coordinator, was inundated with enquiries from current and potential members, and the Jumping Fleas and the Pied Pipers played (and sang) their hearts out. The refreshments were popular and memorable, the gentlemen on the tea rota worked overtime and the screen displayed website items of interest. Such was the enthusiasm shown as people arrived on one of the hottest afternoons of the year that Jane Hayward, Secretary, began the proceedings early, her light-hearted approach setting the tone for a happy, successful and busy event!

The Roles of a Supporting Artist – a TV/Film Extra – Monday, 14 September

Rob Brewer has been a TV and film extra for seven years since retiring from his full-time job as a police officer with Thames Valley Police. He has appeared in over 50 different productions (sometimes playing multiple roles) from Hollywood blockbusters, low-budget films, TV shows, comedies and even a couple of adverts.

In his presentation he will share with you some of the industry's intriguing insights into the life of an Extra. Some of the productions that he has appeared in are: James Bond 007 – No Time to Die; Bohemian Rhapsody; Dr. Strange, Holby City; Grantchester and many more.

You Couldn't Make It Up: the secret life of a TV Reporter – Monday, 12 October

Bharat Patel was one of the first Asian reporters on British radio and TV: his family left India and settled in Leicester, England when he was a young boy.

Bharat has worked for BBC Radio Leicester, Radio 4, ITV and BBC TV. He has covered major events that have made the headlines from earthquakes to plane crashes. He has also interviewed a parrot who spoke five languages and the world's oldest donkey. But behind the headlines are dozens of comic stories which have never been told – until now!

POETRY GROUP

This poem was written by Sue Hales when the subject for the Poetry group meeting was Relationships. Following the Open Day last month her group leader felt this would be an appropriate poem to promote the benefits of the u3a.

Join Today!

Hurray, hurray for the u3a
Where you can find a friend a day.
Meet them with your ukulele
Or when you're really singing gaily.
Meet them when you're speaking French
Or resting on a rural bench.
When exploring local walks
Or listening to intriguing talks
On cooking, foreign travel, birds
Filling everybody's head with words
That fascinate and make you say-
"I'm glad I joined the u3a!"

SPOTLIGHT ON SHAKESPEARE GROUP 3



Members of Shakespeare Group 3 went to Toilethorpe during July and August to see their production of Twelfth Night, a play which they had been viewing and discussing earlier this year so it was perfect timing. It had proved impossible to find a date to suit all so we ended up as four separate groups, all of whom have shared their comments and contributed to this article.

It was rather ironic as, we are only too aware, we have been experiencing very high temperatures this summer. Some of us did enjoy a picnic before the production but the Met Office had predicted the UK's hottest day on the 13th August and those with tickets for that evening decided against a picnic in the sun. Twelfth Night had been written for a cooler time of the year, the end of the Christmas season, and there were some nice touches to reflect this – a letter addressed Dear Santa mixed up with a challenge to a duel, and Sir Andrew and Sir Toby disguised as Christmas trees.

The group was unanimous in their enjoyment of the humour, and Feste, the jester, gets a special mention. With her expressive face and body language to match, she made sense of the often puzzling words and phrases with which Shakespeare teases us. Everyone commented on the excellent costumes, particularly Olivia's, and the fabulous set. The production made good use of the statues

scattered around the set. On occasions the comic interaction by the cast with the statues drew our attention from the main action but that was a very imaginative use of the set.



Having studied several DVD interpretations of this play, it was great to see Cesario/Viola and Sebastian looking so alike, making the mistaking of identities all the more credible. But I think I can honestly say on behalf of the whole group that Malvolio's cross gartered yellow stockings interlude was the most outrageous and hilarious we have ever seen. A member commented he looked as if he had strayed in from a performance of *The Rocky Horror Show* and if you had seen him, I'm sure you would agree.

The music however split our opinions. The scenes were broken up by various modern songs using Elizabethan lyrics. The opening shipwreck and storm scene was accompanied by "It Raineth Men" and some of us thoroughly enjoyed the juxtaposition of modern recognizable songs and Shakespearean language and instruments. One member of the group had taken three grandchildren to the production and commented that they really appreciated music with which they could identify. However, others commented that the music let it down in their opinion, as unfortunately the minstrels couldn't keep in time with the pre-recorded backing.

Overall, an excellent evening – tangled love interests, mistaken identities and tomfoolery as you'd expect from a Shakespeare comedy – together with warm weather (no blankets needed as in previous years!) and a strong cast.

Photographs by Tim Steele, provided by the Stamford Shakespeare Company. These wonderful costumes were all handmade by Jo Henderson.

SPOTLIGHT ON GARDEN GROUP 3'S VISIT TO ELTON HALL'S GARDENS



Garden Group 3's visit in August was to Elton Hall which is a country house in Elton, on the border of Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire. It has been the ancestral home of the Proby family since 1660. The hall lies across 3,800 acres through which the River Nene runs. The building incorporates 15th, 17th, 18th and 19th century parts and is a Grade I listed building. We had decided not to visit the house, as some of us had done this in a previous visit, but to concentrate on the gardens.



The present gardens are based on a design devised in 1911 and were originally designed for 14 gardeners to manage, and included a walled garden which is now Bosworth's Garden Centre.

The Victorian gardens were renovated in the 20th and 21st centuries and contain a knot garden, a rose garden and a Gothic Orangery which was built to celebrate the Millennium. The building was designed to reflect the Gothic façade of the South Front. The small gardens are surrounded by tall yew hedges, which once enclosed a bowling green before the First World War. These are planted with Mediterranean species and oranges and lemons in terracotta pots. Nearby is the Shell Arbour, built to celebrate the Jubilee and decorated by Charlotte Kerr Wilson.



The Lily Pond was part of the original design by Hallam Murray. It used to be planted with bedding such as ageratums and salvias. It has now been enlarged and surrounded by a low wall and generously planted with many herbaceous perennials and small shrubs. Elton Hall has some magnificent topiary that has been created over the last 30 years and the crisply cut topiary of the family dog, the crest and peacocks frame the house. Half of them are recent additions and they help to balance the setting of the house between the parterre, lawns and paths.

The Flower Garden was originally the Edwardian Rose Garden but when the current occupants' parents arrived in 1980 it was in a poor state of repair so they asked Peter Beales to help them replant the garden.



For twenty years, the new Rose Garden looked magnificent, but unfortunately an inherent rose sickness in the soil meant they had to think again. The stunning Flower Garden, fountain and Wisteria Walk are the result of those thoughts.

We then returned to Bosworth's Garden Centre where we had parked our cars, and ended the afternoon's visit with tea and delicious cake.

NEW GROUPS

PHILOSOPHY

David Johnston is starting a new Philosophy Group. We have three potential members at present and would like at least another three. The present plan is to meet once a month in the Talbot, day to be decided. Subject: modern issues, theory and guiding principles of behaviour.

MUSIC GROUP

We have two members who would like to start a music making group. If you can play an instrument and would like to join them – the more the merrier – then do get in touch. It sounds like a very interesting new venture and another addition to our music groups.

If you are interested in joining either of these groups, please contact Lidia Douglas at groupscoordinatoroundleu3a@gmail.com

TAI CHI

WITH ANDY ELDRED



To reserve a spot, express interest or ask questions, contact Andy on
Telephone: 01832 710486
Email: aoeldred@btinternet.com

What's in it for me?

- Better Mobility
- Better Balance
- Better Memory

What to expect:

- Fun learning new skills in a friendly non competitive environment.
- No grading, no end-point
- Just an aim of continuous improvement.

All welcome from complete beginners to more experienced practitioners. Practice within your current level of fitness/ability, (there is even a sitting routine).

No equipment needed – just loose clothing, soft shoes.
1hr sessions once a week
£2 per person
Fletton House, Oundle, Thursday afternoons timing tbc.

DECEMBER MONTHLY MEETING

Although December is a long way off, this is just to let you know that on Monday, 14 December we will be holding a Christmas Extravaganza performance as we have done in previous years with a variety of contributions from our members. Previously these have included music, drama, poetry and many other acts, so please get your thinking caps on and consider what you might like to do if you would like to perform on the day.



September Quiz

Part One: Will it have cooled down by the time you read the September Newsletter? If so, here are 10 alphabetically jumbled things that are hot to remind you of the heatwave.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. ACEFIMPR | 7. DELLMU EINW |
| 2. ACEFNRU | 8. ACEEHLMNORRTU
EILNOOPsx |
| 3. AAGMM | 9. EHT AAAHRS DEERST |
| 4. AAEEHTVW | 10. CCEHIKN ADILNOOV |
| 5. ADEHHIORRSS | |
| 6. AEEDLMNO | |

Part Two: And to remind you of what is to come, 10 at the other end of the scale:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. AAACCINRTT | 7. AEEFGIORRRT |
| 2. AAACEHLNV | 8. ALOPR ABERS |
| 3. AAAHILMSY | 9. EORZ EEEDGR
AEEHRTW |
| 4. AALILLNV CEI ACEMR | 10. DFINORS |
| 5. ABCCEIKL | |
| 6. AEEDLMNO | |

Answers to August's Quiz:

1. 1620; 2. 1703; 3. 1756; 4. 1787; 5. 1788; 6. 1855; 7. 1860; 8. 1883; 9. 1894; 10. 1896; 11. 1906; 12. 1910; 13. 1962; 14. 1963; 15. 1964; 16. 1980; 17. 1986; 18. 1991; 19. 1997; 20. 1999.

Quizzes devised by members of the Quizzes 'n' Puzzles Group6. AEEDLMNO

REMINDER: Please may we remind you to contact Carolyn, our Membership Secretary, if any of your contact details change. You can get in touch with her via the link on the Oundle u3a website.