



## Message from the Chair.

Dear Friends,

Thank you for joining me for our Annual Quiz at the Wednesday meeting in November. Ursula, our President and I set the questions and co-hosted a very enjoyable and good humoured competition. Trevor, our Treasurer, produced the Table Photo challenge. Two teams tied for first place (one team was built from scratch, including new members . . . very impressive!) and could not be separated even after a tie break. Sincere thanks to all the participants and those members, who worked diligently through the afternoon to run the event. Do feel free to let us know what sections you would like to see in next year's Quiz; or indeed could you take a turn in organising the Quiz? The afternoon finished with much needed refreshment provided by Steve Dungay and her team for which grateful thanks.

December is looking good for u3a members to get together in the run-up to Christmas. Our Wednesday meeting on 6th features the Christmas Concert, starring our many u3a musical groups. We will start promptly at 2.00 p.m., and conclude with refreshments and mince pies.

On Friday 8 December we hold our Christmas 'Bring & Share' Lunch at Chartham Village Hall, 12.45 for 1.00 p.m. Please book with me on 01304 842 517 or email [chair@u3acanterbury.org.uk](mailto:chair@u3acanterbury.org.uk) and advise if you are bringing a savoury or sweet dish. Please note we do not have facilities to heat or cook food. We do provide drinks. The lunch is always good fun.

I wish you all the very best for the Christmas Season.

*Robin Terry*



## Important Dates to remember

**Wednesday 6 December: Annual u3a Canterbury and District Christmas Concert**

at St. Mary Bredin, Nunnery Fields 2 p.m.

**Friday 8 December: Annual Christmas Lunch** — for further details see Chair's letter above.

**Wednesday 10 January 2024: monthly meeting at St Mary Bredin, Nunnery Fields 2 p.m.**

Speaker: Chris Ransom: 'My Life as a Battlefield Re-enactor'.

**Friday 2 February: Joining Session** at St. Peter's Methodist Church, High Street, 10.30 to 12 noon.



## More about the Christmas Concert

We think it is important to tell you that this is not a conventional concert by singers and musicians who are used to performing.

Your fellow members will entertain you with music they have learnt as part of their u3a activities. Some will be nervous and unsure about performing at all and we are grateful to them and their leaders for agreeing to share the afternoon with us.

We are fortunate this year to have three new musical activities to listen to—so please come along to appreciate and support them and enjoy the afternoon with them.



## Winter Extras

After some well attended and introductory sessions on the Alexander Technique and the Reading of Old Churches and a lively potential tutors and activity leaders workshop we have a few exciting new courses and activities starting in the new year. We will also be repeating a couple of oversubscribed courses and give members on the original waiting lists first choice. All of this will be circulated in a separate Beacon email so please look out for it within the next few weeks.



### Book Review: *The Unreality of Coopers Chase*, by Richard Osman

The fourth novel in the 'Thursday Murder Club' series by multi-talented—and very, very tall—Richard Osman is titled *The Last Devil to Die*. Given the series and this particular title you'll not be surprised to hear that there are multiple deaths involved as the story arcs towards its conclusion some 400 pages later. There's no 'gore' however; the writer knows his target readership well—indeed, there is a subtle resonance in his writing to that of Alexander McCall-Smith (of Gaborone and Edinburgh fame). It is a gentle, good humoured tale of an eclectic group of retired folk getting the better of hardened criminals and sorting out local/national police officers into the bargain. The catalyst for the novel's various murders is a smuggled box full of uncut heroin. As ever, the story's principal characters are residents of a Kent retirement village; although we're given few explicit details, it's clear that they're in their seventies and eighties—and presumably, given their environment and lifestyle, relatively well heeled. Our team of retirees, like the villains they pursue and the police officers who follow in their wake, have what I can only describe as a flexible stance on questions of morality and ethics—but of course this is grist to the mill of a crime writer, even with a storyline as gently humorous as this one. In this particular story we even see them take brief forays into Canterbury and onto a less-than-accurately portrayed University of Kent campus. I enjoyed reading it, as I did the previous three; I have no doubt that this series will, eventually, lose its appeal as all do—but not yet. There is however one advisory note I believe I ought to add: there is a strong thread associated with the effects of dementia woven through the novel—significantly stronger than in earlier novels. If, therefore, you find it difficult to handle such a topic you might wish to leave it on your bookstore's shelf.

*Bob Newport*



### A special date for 2024

On 18–20 July the u3a will be holding Festival 24 in the beautiful city of York.

The event will run over three days and will be held at the University of York based around their exhibition centre.

There will be a wide variety of activities: talks, sporting events, musical entertainment, and workshops which will make this first u3a National Festival something to remember.

**Tickets** are not yet available to buy, but the cost of attending the festival will be:

Day 1 Thursday 18 July: £25 including buffet supper.

Day 2 Friday 19 July: £10 for the full day.

Day 3 Saturday 20 July: £5 for a half day.

Full festival to include all 3 days and a buffet supper on day 1: £35

#### Accommodation

Rooms on campus.

£61.80 pp for bed and breakfast. All rooms are ensuite singles with tea and coffee making.

There are no larger rooms available on this site. Some rooms are accessible on the ground floor. If this is not suitable for your needs a list will shortly be available of alternative accommodation.

To receive Festival updates just go online and sign up to the u3a Friends Newsletter and consult the Third Age Trust website.

*Christine Hughes, Vice Chair*



## Holidays

The Spring Holiday to South Yorkshire will be the last one that Helen Natrass organises and leads for the time being. Helen wants to use her scarce time to achieve some of her own 'far-flung' travel aspirations and interests. This, of course, is in addition to the many other u3a activities that Helen leads. Helen may help in organising holidays again in future years.

I wish to express my own personal gratitude to Helen for organising five coach holidays in two years, starting with Shropshire in May 2022. This was followed by Suffolk in September 2022, South Wales in May 2023, and Hampshire in September 2023. I am certain many of you will wish to echo my sentiments.

We have two challenges to consider please:

- 1) For those of us who have signed up to the April 2024 holiday (which is sold out); can you volunteer to help Helen with some minor tasks during this holiday?
- 2) For consideration by all members.—

Could you join me in a meeting to discuss the way forward with Holiday planning? Ideally this would be done by a small team. I will organise a venue to meet, once I have an indication as to who is interested.

My wife, Pauline, and I enjoy these five day coach holidays immensely and it is a highly valued activity amongst Canterbury u3a members.

Please contact me to discuss either or both challenges on 01304 842 517, or email me on [chair@u3acanterbury.org.uk](mailto:chair@u3acanterbury.org.uk)

*Robin Terry*



## Quiz Answers from last month's Bulletin (Cryptic Authors)

- 1 A sheltered youngster (3,5) Lee Child
- 2 Sounds like a new day in the West Country (8, 7) Somerset Maugham
- 3 Old Queen's hubby and uprooted sumac go together for French scribe (6,5) Albert Camus
- 4 Possibly a Breton Limey? (5, 6) Emily Brontë
- 5 Fish doesn't want to live long it seems (6, 7) Salman Rushdie
- 6 Wobbly lament after climbing Everest (6, 7) Hilary Mantel
- 7 French give a cake for this lady (5,5) Donna Tartt
- 8 The square guy (2, 5) Le Carré
- 9 Remember to firm garden soil before finding nuke ( 7, 4) Irmgard Kuen
- 10 She found the night would inspire her (5, 6) Djuna Barnes

