

Thatcham U3A Newsletter

July 2017

www.u3asites.org.uk/thatcham

Reg. Charity No. 1112006



U3A Trip down memory lane at Oakham Treasures



Chairman's Report AGM 2017

They say time flies when you are having fun, I must have had a lot of fun this year! I am writing my report as Chairman of Thatcham U3A, for the second year. A lot has certainly happened in this past year.

Our existing groups continue to thrive, although some well-established groups are now looking to increase their numbers. New blood is always very welcome, as it can provide a fresh direction. We have introduced two new groups this year, Cribbage and Holiday French. We will watch their progress with interest.

The travel group, always popular, has visited Bowood House, Sherborne Castle and Oakham Treasures. Their residential trip was to South Wales. The theatre group saw Chicago at Bristol Hippodrome in July and the Mikado in Windsor during August. Their next trip will be to Southampton to see La Cage aux Folles.



Attendance at our Open meetings continues to be good. Two outstanding talks were given by Lady Carnarvon and Ian Keable. The Christmas Open meeting involved co-operation of several groups and individuals. Rita Bottomley wrote our very first Nativity playlet. The play reading group provided the characters, both singing groups provided the music and David Nicholls did the Art work to set the scene. Nigel Smith, once again entertained us with his festive poems.

Paul Shave and the play reading group produced our first audio newsletter. They have continued to do this with subsequent newsletters. Paul wrote a piece for the Third Age Matters in the hope of spreading good practice. This was the first time, to my knowledge, that we have made a contribution to this magazine.

We have run four trips this year, to Bristol, London, Oxford and Windsor. Many of our members have thoroughly enjoyed them. My thanks goes to Jane Head, Cath Hamblin and Marnie Houslip for helping to organise these. Jen Fielding and Joy helped with selling tickets too.

Thanks to help from Jen Fielding, we have managed to run two Study days recently. The Art, multi-media day was led by Tanya Patey and the Singing Study day was led by Nik Stoter. The participants certainly seemed to enjoy the days.

Joy and I attended the National Conference this year. Joy organised a 'new member' morning as part of our monthly coffee mornings. She has helped organise the Handibus to help members without transport to attend the Open meetings. The library now has a U3A folder to help members who are not on email to access information about Study Days etc.

Julie Wall will be leaving the Executive Committee after this AGM. My thanks goes to her for all she has done for our U3A on the Committee, as Chairman and then Vice Chairman. I will miss her good sense and guidance. Ann Allen, too, will be leaving the Committee and will no longer be the Editor for our Newsletter, a post she has filled since the first edition. Paul Shave will relinquish his post as Convener and new member contact. My thanks to all of them for their hard work and help.

Hilary Beckingham will become Vice Chairman and Jen Fielding Study Day Co-ordinator. The rest of the Committee will be unchanged.

I will end my report by saying 'thank-you' to all the members of the Executive Committee for the parts they have played in keeping things running in the way we have got used to expecting, the conveners for leading their groups, their contributions to the Festival Open morning and organising the teas at the Open meetings, Jane Head and her team for the Coffee mornings and 'Beat the Blues' and Summer Luncheons and all the other people who help with the many, many jobs, often unasked.



If you feel you could help in any small way, by starting a new interest group or joining the Committee you will be very welcome and be given any help you need to fulfil the role. Please volunteer.

Lynette

On Tuesday 23rd May 23 of us gathered in the Old Bluecoat School on the A4 to experience a whole day of singing. Nik Stoter our tutor was the most amazingly encouraging teacher. We began the day, of course, with coffee or tea, but then Nik put us through our paces with quite a number of breathing and singing exercises to warm up our throats and 'voice boxes'. He had chosen a range of songs for us to learn during the day. The first was 'SING' by The Carpenters. The lyrics seemed



appropriate – 'Don't worry that it's not good enough for anyone else to hear' but by the end of the day we could have pleased an audience! The second song, by the late Mama Cass, was 'It's Getting Better' and Nik introduced some harmonies. Plucky volunteers learned to sing the harmonies and the song was really uplifting.

We broke for lunch and then became 'cowboys' or is it 'cow-people' these days?

Anyway we were all part of

the musical 'Oklahoma' and Ray was heard to say by the end of our session that we didn't sound bad after only one session. We called out our 'Yeeow' cries loudly and with vigour!

The lyrical, quiet 'Edelweiss' then followed and, in harmony, we 'Bless(ed) our homeland for ever'. The last song of the workshop was a super one for letting the voice go and it was hard for me not to sway to the music too - 'Breaking up is hard to do' - we loved the 'Down dooby doo, down down' chorus. Towards the end of the afternoon, Nik took us through all our songs again and I think we did him proud. He then added in a bonus offer of 'Mamma Mia' to send us on our way feeling positive and invigorated by the whole day. Singing is a naturally uplifting experience and Nik made the whole day an extremely enjoyable event for all who attended.

(Report by Stephanie Stevenson and photo by Brian Harper)

SNAPS PHOTOGRAPHY



I am fascinated by macro and close up photography. These shots were taken in August 2015 at The Thatcham Allotments - one of my favourite shoots with the Snaps Group.
(1, 2, 3, and 4)

Marnie Houslip



These photos have all been taken on a British Isles Cruise in September 2016. Numbers 5, 6 and 7 were taken during an excursion to Monet Gardens in France.

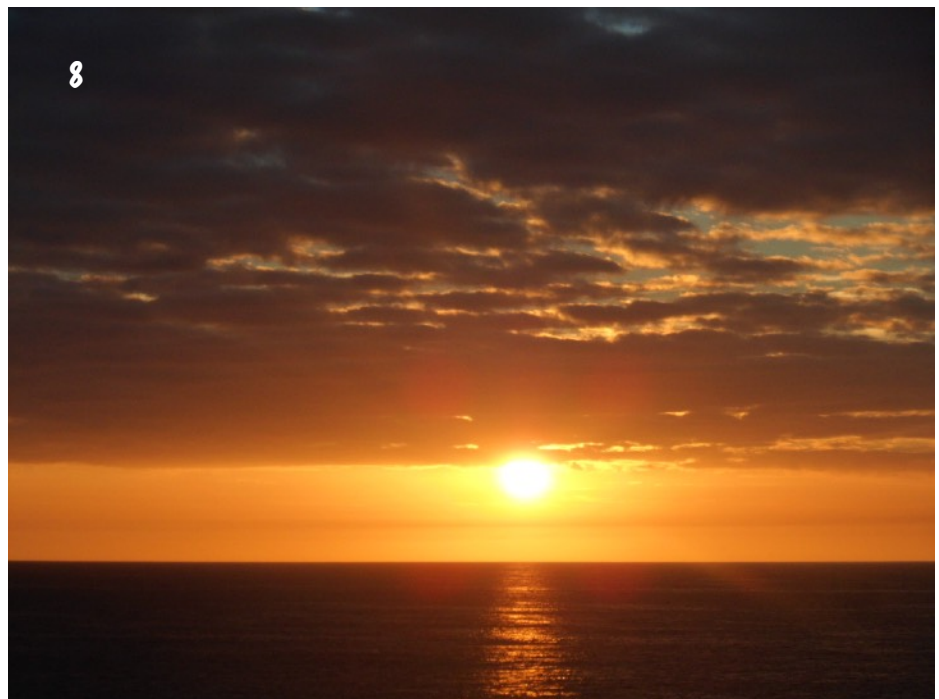
Richard Drew



Number 8

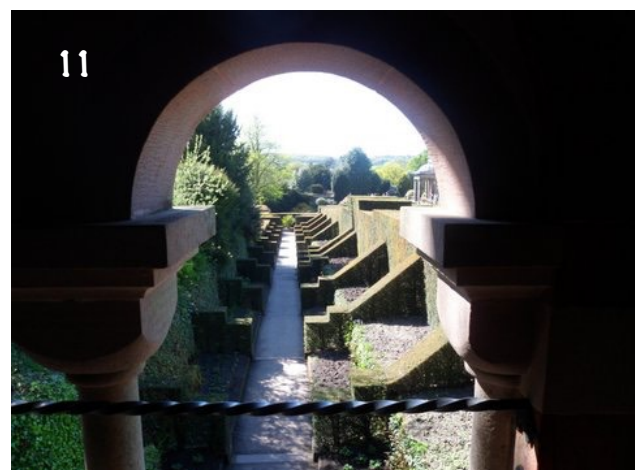
**This stunning sunset
was taken whilst at
sea**

Richard Drew



**These photos have all been taken in the Peak
District area - 9, 10 and 11**

Tony Collie





1980 An old garden wall behind Craydens shop in Thatcham Broadway. Taken in 2014 when the bookshop was in the Broadway. The 'lane' is now being built on.



The junction of the High Street with the bottom of Park Lane in 2011. (The building was ATS tyres for a while). This site was recently redeveloped to contain flats and a cafe. This original building has a very long roof which has been kept but is now hidden behind new buildings.



1982 View along the lane towards the Broadway and Craydens shop. The wall in photo 12 is on the left.

The English Barn on the A4 in 2012 (Bath Road? London Road?) This was a farm barn. It was extensively renovated to be a private residence but now sadly stands empty.

Photos 12, 13, 14 and 15 are places in the centre of Thatcham which have been changed in the last few years.

Ann Walter



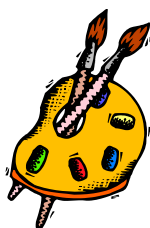
Art Group 1



We are a friendly group who meet on alternate Tuesdays. We continue to enjoy our art, painting various topics. In June it has been Landscapes in monochrome and in July it will be Cities and Buildings.

Contact: Pat Howard

Art Group 2



We continue to meet at the Thatcham Baptist Hall on alternate Thursdays 2.00 to 4.00 pm. Recently we have been working on exploring tone in watercolours and painting skies with Venice in the distance beneath. We welcome new members. Many say when they start with us that they can't paint or draw but without exception the improvement after a few weeks is startling.

Contact: David Nicholls

Book Club



Over recent months we have read a range of new titles as well as returning to some old favourites. These include: My Cousin Rachel by Daphne Du Maurier, The Trouble With Goats And Sheep by Joanna Cannon, Hotel On The Corner Of Bitter And Sweet by Jamie Ford and The Museum Of You by Carys Bray.

In June we enjoyed the film version of 'My Cousin Rachel' starring Rachel Weisz at the local cinema after we'd read the book. They did alter a few things from the original

storyline and gave it a different ending, which we weren't entirely happy about!

Keep an eye on our page on the U3A website for news of our latest read. Any keen reader is welcome to come along to our meetings to see how we run things and find out whether it's right for you. We are a very relaxed and informal group - if you love to read, then try us out. You can find out more by visiting the Book Swap table at the monthly Open Meetings and having a chat with one of us.

**Contacts: Deborah Buckland
Sue Gammer**

Canasta



We need more people to have a go. New people can be taught with ease so come and try. We meet on the fourth Tuesday of the month 2pm to 4pm. It is good fun and a friendly environment.

Contacts: Bob & Dot Wetten

Computing



Computing Skills Group does not hold meetings at present. However we try to publicise useful articles from bodies like the police and councils.

Information and advice from Thames Valley Police to everyone including local businesses.

Thames Valley Police have joined up with the Metropolitan Police to produce their own version of the 'Little Book of Cyber Scams', to give information and advice to everyone including local businesses.

The 40-page booklet covers a wide range of cyber and cyber-enabled threats, including malware and ransomware, social engineering attacks - where cyber crime is made possible by someone gathering data deceitfully in person, by phone or email - denial of service attacks and data leakage.

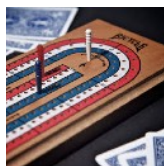
It follows the successful 'Little Book of Big Scams', now in its third edition, which covers things like door to door scams. Both can be viewed and downloaded via the [Thames Valley Police website](#).

While some of the information is targeted at businesses, the advice is relevant to all.

You should be able to save the files to your computer. They are quite long (40 and 52 pages) so only print them out if essential.

Contact: Ann Walter

Cribbage



Many thanks to Dot and Bob who kept Cribbage going while I had had an overseas holiday. It has been a slow start for this group - more members are needed so do come along. Meetings are held every fourth Thursday from 2pm - 4pm at Neville Court.

Contact: Ann Pettafor

Craft Group



We have some interesting things planned for the next few months. Next meeting we are going to be knitting and crocheting flowers,

and later this year napkin folding and Suffolk puffs. Do you know what you can do with Suffolk Puffs? Do you even know what they are? No, me neither but it is really fun learning.

Work on continues on the Thatcham Tapestry. Thatcham is acknowledged to be one of the oldest continually inhabited places in the country. Our tapestry takes us from the time of a campfire and rough shelter off Lower Way around 13,000 years ago, right up to the present time, and covers a variety of different crafts. We are hoping when it is finished it will hang in a public place in Thatcham, more about this later.

Craft really does demonstrate the strengths of U3A - groups of like minded people gathering together to share their expertise. We meet the **third Friday** in the month, in the **Baptist Church** on Wheelers's Green Way. If you are interested in coming along contact me on the number below.



Contact: Jen Fielding

Quills - Creative Writing



We have been very busy since Easter, writing on varied subjects such as birds, beetles or even boxes. It is fascinating to discover how people's perceptions of the same idea differ. As always there is much conversation too, we are very good at "putting the world to rights" We have been very happy to welcome two new members to our little group. Why not give us a try, writing is not as frightening as you may think.

Contact: Catherine Hamblin

Holiday French



This new group is small and friendly. We are concentrating on basics. We meet in members' homes on the **1st and 3rd Thursdays** each month at **2.30pm**. If you are interested you are most welcome to come along and try us.

Contact: Marnie Houslip

Discussion Group 1



Sadly, our Discussion Group has lost valuable members during the last few months and we have decided to put it into abeyance at least until the Autumn. We are very flexible as to topics to talk about and obviously urgently require new blood. Should people wish to join a very friendly small group then please do contact me.

Contact: Hilary Beckingham

Discussion Group 2



We are a small, friendly group who meet the **first Friday** of each month at **2pm**. We meet in individual members' homes to discuss topical subjects.

Contact: Anita Higgs

Gardening Group



The Gardening Group have had some interesting talks this year and have now started our Summer programme of garden visits.

In April we had an extremely interesting talk on hostas from John Baker. He and his wife have a garden devoted to hostas called 'Hanging Hostas' which appeared on Gardeners World a few years ago.

We started our summer programme in May with a visit to Sandleford Place. This surprised us by being a beautiful tranquil riverside garden, only yards from the A339! An added bonus was that, while we had tea, our hostess's husband sat down at the piano and played beautifully to us.

In June we had a coach trip to R.H.S Wisley, and in July we will go to Field Farm Cottage in Sulhamstead.

The Gardening Group always welcomes new members. If you would like to join us please contact one of the conveners.

(Photo by Gerda Ratray)



**Contacts: Mary Parker
Penny Webb**

Genealogy



Family History is a social group of like minded people who wish to search out their ancestors. We have come across some very interesting stories as we have progressed. There is so much online these days to get you started, some of it is free such as familysearch.org, freecen, and freereg. If you would like to come along for a visit we meet the **last Monday** of every month between 2 and 4.

Contact: Isabel Trent

Knitting and Cross-stitch



This group meet every **first Tuesday of the month** in a member's home. We work on our own projects with much laughter and talk whilst helping each other if necessary and passing on tips.

Contact: Ann Hazelby

Latin



The group continues to meet regularly on a Thursday afternoon in Bucklebury. I am happy to help anyone who remembers some Latin and would like to join us.

Contact: Dorothy Goode

Bon Appetit Luncheon Club



In March we had a very nice meal at the *Travellers Friend*, Crookham Common – unfortunately our date clashed with the rearranged *Beat the Blues lunch* and so we all

had to make a decision! We travelled a bit further afield to the *Craven Arms*, Enborne in April – very enjoyable - and in May Margaret Robinson kindly supervised the lunch at the *Spotted Dog*, Cold Ash when I was on holiday; thank you Margaret! We have just had an excellent meal at a new venue for us at the *Six Bells* at Beenham who made us very welcome. As always many thanks to my loyal members for their support.

Contact: Elaine Fletcher

Second Helpings Luncheon Group



We have enjoyed tasty food and each other's company at several local pubs and restaurants including Mandarin Court, The Mill, The Hare and Hounds and Spice. We look forward to our next get together at the Toby. Our group stays mainly in Thatcham which is easier for members who have no car and we support our local restaurants.

Contact: Jane Head

Third Course Luncheon Club



Third helpings have had a eventful time lately trying a few new places. We went to the Nawab, Thatcham in May, Cote Brasserie in March, Hare and hounds in April, and Bella Italia in Newbury market place in June. I am hoping to book The Angel Woolhampton for July and then I will need a volunteer to take over for a couple of months when I have an operation.

Contact: Karen Eggleton

The Munchers Luncheon Club



The Group meet on the **fourth Friday** in the month and have grown since the last Newsletter. We have been to a variety of eating places this year including the Bella Luna in Thatcham, as well as our usual favourite places

Contact : Ann Minks

Tuck In Luncheon Club



We continue to meet on the 3rd Friday of the month. We have very enjoyable lunches but unfortunately we do not have any vacancies at the moment.

Contacts:

Sue and John Gammer

Mah Jong



MahJong is an ancient Chinese game played with a set of tiles. It is great fun to play and will keep your brain cells working! Our numbers have recently dropped and so we would welcome both beginners and those who have played before, to come and give our group a try. Our meetings are held at Nevil Court in the dining room every **1st and 3rd Wednesday** of the month at **2.15 pm**.

Contact: Marilyn Downing

Music Appreciation Group



We continue to meet on the third Tuesday of the month and as always enjoy listening to a variety of music. Our first meeting included

Gershwin's American in Paris, followed by Beethoven's 7th and then a Sinfonietta by Janacek. We are all happy to try listening to different composers. Lesley has introduced us to a little known work, 'The Land of the Mountain and Flood' by Hamish MacCunn and we have heard several anthems by Huddersfield Choral Society (since Hazel knew one of the members!). Other music we have listened to over the weeks since the last Newsletter are 'Don Juan' by Richard Strauss, and pieces by Chopin, Liszt, Tchaikovsky, Mozart, Schubert, Nielsen and Hindemith.

(Report by Lesley Saward)

Contact: Richard Hyland

Snaps Photography Group



Pages 4, 5 and 6 show examples of photographs taken by the Snaps Group. Anyone who is interested in joining please contact me on the number below. We meet on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month at 10 am.

Contact: Iain Dunn



Play Reading Group

The group continues to be well attended, and we now have a waiting list. Since March we've read **Key For Two** by John Chapman and Dave Freeman, **Death Walked In** by Bettine Manktelow, **Cuckoo** by Emlyn Williams and **Busybody** by Jack Popplewell. After the last newsletter, we made another audio version of it, and we'll be doing it again with this newsletter.

Contact: Paul Shave