

u3a

Newsletter

Click [here](#) to open the newsletter in your browser.



Janet of Balsall Common u3a shared this photo in the u3a Found in Nature learning initiative. See another of the beautiful photos further down the newsletter.

October

Dear friends,

Now that we are turning towards the Autumn and the days are getting darker, it is good to be thinking about enjoying time together in true u3a style.

Over the last week I have been at the AGM and heard about what some members are planning in the month ahead, from Harvest flower arranging to Network gatherings.

The u3a merchandise winter sale is now on encouraging us to get our beanie hats ready for those winter walks and there is also growing anticipation about the u3a Festival 2024 where a whole plethora of u3a skills and talents have been offered.

This Friends newsletter remains full of the u3a spirit of adventure and I hope you enjoy the many stories from across our movement.

With very best wishes

Sam Mauger

CEO of the Third Age Trust

In this issue...

You On Your Own! Not anymore!

Spotlight On: Discovering AI

Bitesize Newsletter

[Download the Bitesize Newsletter](#)

Your Stories

The u3a Newsletter means a lot to me. By being in contact through Newsletters or Facebook, I feel we are a family.

I enjoy the Newsletter for its good and clever ideas from members including reading their stories.

Helen, Isle of Arran u3a

News From the Trust



The Third Age Trust AGM

Thank you to everyone who attended the Third Age Trust AGM. The full captioned video of the AGM is now available on [our YouTube channel](#).

Conversations with the Trust

There are two upcoming opportunities to meet with staff of the Third Age Trust and ask questions.

Wednesday 8 November, 3pm - [Conversations with the CEO](#).

Wednesday 15 November, 2pm - [Conversations with the Policy and](#)



Tower Hamlets u3a celebrated Alfresco in Autumn in u3a week by exploring the Roman Walls in the City of London.

Did you celebrate u3a week?

We have put together a survey to help us measure the impact of u3a week.

Whether you celebrated u3a week, or chose not to this year, we would love to hear from you.

The below survey will take about five minutes to complete and will help us to evaluate the support and resources we offer u3as during u3a week, and how we can help you raise the profile of your u3a in your local community.



Winter Merchandise Sale

There's been a price drop of up to 25% off on many of our u3a branding merchandise - including beanie hats, umbrellas, travel mugs and more. Shop now on [the u3a brand centre](#).

u3a News

Every newsletter we share news from your u3as. Whatever you're doing



Recently almost 40 members of Thornbury u3a's YOYO group joined a boat trip along the Avon Gorge.

You On Your Own? Not anymore!

Thornbury u3a created the YOYO (You On Your Own! Not Anymore!) group two years ago, especially, but not exclusively, aimed at members who might be on their own. The group has a monthly meeting, often with a speaker and theme, along with two get-togethers each week. Activities have included regular skittles, guided walks around Bristol, theatre trips, National Trust events



Welcome to the movement Borough Green & Wrotham u3a

The inaugural meeting for Borough Green & Wrotham u3a was a great success. The Mayor for Tonbridge & Malling, James Lark, and local Councillor Mike Taylor both attended.

73 members signed up on the day and the first meeting of their u3a will be held in November. Vice Chair Christine says, "The future is looking bright so we all



Saltburn District u3a recognised as Dementia Friendly

Saltburn District u3a have received a certificate from Dementia Action Teesside confirming that they are now 'Dementia Friendly'.

This is part of Saltburn District u3a's ongoing work to be as accessible as possible for members - the next project is a presentation to inform members how sight loss impacts on everyday life.

East of England u3a's Aviation Group

recently visited the Stow Maries WWI Aerodrome Museum. Read more on [our u3a blog, Sources.](#)

Learning Across the Movement

These are just some of the [national activities members can get involved in](#) - see more on our website.

Create, learn and share with members from across the UK

Our recent learning survey showed that the most popular national activities were those run by members themselves.

There are many shared activities for u3a members to get involved in across the movement – from the short story competition, to ‘write a letter to your younger self’ to memory collection initiatives such as ‘all our yesterdays’. These ideas come from members, and drive engagement across a range of subjects.

If you have an idea for a new national activity such as a shared project, a task or activity for members to get involved in, get in touch by emailing



Give it a go group - podcast interview

Karen from Mawdesley u3a appears on the u3a radio podcast this month to talk about her give it a go group, in which members try new things together. It all started from Karen's desire to try pottery - since then, they've gone indoor sky diving, zip wiring and kayaking. Listen to Karen talk about the group in



u3a Found in Nature celebrates the beauty to be found in the natural world and the most recent gallery has photos of seals, puffins, jellyfish and wildflowers, including this photo by Cathryn from Bradford u3a. See more in [our gallery](#).

National Events

These are just some of the events for members that are coming soon. You



Sir Thomas Lipton, from Cabin Boy to Tea Tycoon to International Yachtsman

Thursday 9 November, 2pm

Join Neville Lyons of Guildford u3a in tracing the extraordinary 'rags to riches' life of Sir Thomas Lipton.



The Curious History of Labyrinths & Mazes

Friday 10 November, 10am

Join Dr Julie E Bounford, social historian and author, for this talk on labyrinths and mazes.



Family History: When the transcript is not enough

Wednesday 15 November, 2pm

Julie of Syston & District u3a continues her series sharing insights, tips and examples for family historians.

News from the Board

Liz Thackray, Chair of the Third Age Trust

Last week we had our AGM where we welcomed new Trustees to the Board, said our farewells to those retiring from the Board and considered the future of our movement.

A resolution was passed mandating the u3a Trust to engage in efforts to increase our membership substantially. **I am sure we all share the sentiments expressed by the proposer and seconder u3as of the resolution, that the u3a is a wonderful organisation** and it is surprising that so few people, relative to the numbers eligible, actually join us.

As the u3a Trust staff and Trustees consider how to respond to the resolution in practice, two thoughts:

- To engage in a u3a recruitment campaign we will be pleased to have the support of u3as throughout the UK. That means having groups ready to welcome new members and where necessary forming new groups and being an open door.
- Being able to answer "what is u3a" by explaining to those asking that it is an organisation where we meet like minded people, share social activities and learn together and from each other as we develop our skills and interests.

We are getting ready to do our part, but we need to work together with all

Beware of Fraud

A Treasurer of a u3a got in touch with us to say he had been contacted by someone claiming to be Liz Thackray, asking for payment. Please always double check emails of this nature - and if in doubt, email info@u3a.org.uk

Our Impact

u3a is developing the movement's voice to make a social impact. Read about ongoing projects [on Our Impact page](#).



87% of members support having an Older People's Commissioner

Thanks so much to everyone who filled out our survey sharing your thoughts about the role of an Older People's Commissioner - an overwhelming majority of members felt it was a good idea to have a Commissioner.

In the words of one member “There is an increasing number of people living longer. We need someone, independent, with legal status, connected to each government in the UK, who promotes the needs of older people.”

Read more on [the latest news section of the website.](#)

As part of our work with This Age Thing and the Design Age Institute, the Design Age Institute have put together a survey about the Myths of Ageing. They'd love to know your views so please take the survey.

Sources

Your Thoughts on Positive Ageing

Positive ageing means to me, not denying the ageing process. Accepting the limitations which at 77 inevitably come along.

I'm still young in outlook. I'm still intensely interested in people and life and the world around me.

Physically I'm not quite the person I once was. In every other respect I'd much rather be the person I am now.

Patricia, Crouch End & District u3a

Following on from our conversations around positive ageing last month, u3a members shared their interpretations of what positive ageing means to them. Answers ranged from doing the things you loved - from jogging to textile art - to having time to yourself.

Read this article, and much more, on [our u3a blog, Sources.](#)

Social Media News



Positive ageing? These 6 members of Teignmouth & District u3a Sea Swimming Group enjoy going youth hostelting together. Today they (aged from 58 to ?) were enjoying a sauna after one of their 7 (yes 7) dips in the 24 hours they were in Studland Village (near Swanage).

Ipplepen & Surrounds u3a is a recently formed u3a in Devon. Their new X profile (formerly Twitter) is being used to promote u3a within the area by sharing stories from their u3a and other local u3as. [Follow Ipplepen u3a on X.](#)

Subject Advice News

See all the latest updates and the full list of Subject Advisers on [the Subject Advice page](#).



Learning more about: Yoga with Subject Adviser Patricia

When did you first start practicing yoga?

I got started with yoga when I moved to a new job and new home in the Stirling area in my early twenties. As I didn't know anyone, some colleagues kindly invited me to join them for their weekly yoga class. Since then I have been hooked. Finally, in my '3rd age' I decided to study for Yoga Scotland's 2 year

What would you say to members thinking of starting a yoga group in their u3a?

My two tips when starting a group would be: do consider your audience and what approach to yoga is most suitable for the proposed group. Are the prospective members looking for an active, physical type of session or a more meditative, relaxing approach? Do also consider some of the 'legal' requirements such as Data Protection and Health and Safety issues on which the u3a can advise.

How do you hope to help u3a members as Yoga Subject Adviser?

I am fairly new to the role, and hope to build on the excellent support previously provided by Peter. Members who have an existing group or are thinking of starting a new one are welcome to contact me through my Subject Advice page. As I get more familiar with the role, my intention is to offer a series of online workshops suitable for the varied yoga group profiles within the u3a. I look forward to hearing from and meeting many 'u3a Yogis,' whether in person or online over the coming months.

[Find out more about Patricia and the support she can give your yoga group on the Yoga Subject Advice page.](#)

If your u3a has an Astronomy Group which is not in touch with the Astronomy Subject Adviser, please encourage the leader to get in

Martin is aware of about 60 Astronomy Groups but believes there are a lot more. He sends news and interesting emails to the Groups.

Advice and Volunteering News

See all the latest advice on [our advice pages](#). Also on the Advice section is our [programme of online workshops](#).

Trustees' Week: Online Workshops

From 6-10 November we will be celebrating Trustees' Week with charities across the UK. Did you know that all u3a committee members are Trustees?

During the week we will be running online workshops which are open to all members, including Trustees or members interested in the Trustee role.

- Tuesday 7 November - Contingency planning for your u3a
- Wednesday 8 November - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - Supporting u3as to enact their legal obligations *NEW*
- Thursday 9 November - Running your u3a - Information for Trustees
- Friday 10 November - Recruiting Committee Members - Learn & Share

To book your place, and to see the full workshop programme including the new 'managing complaints and disciplinary processes in your u3a' workshop, please

Offers and Services

u3a Offers and Services is the section of the newsletter offering discounts to u3a members and friends.



u3a Click and Save: claim an exclusive 4% discount on your shopping and fuel at Morrisons

Save on your weekly grocery shop, clothing and technology with a Morrisons Gift Card or eGift Card*.

What's more, you can save on the cost of fuel by using your Gift Card at Morrisons' 339 petrol stations located throughout the UK

[Find out more.](#)

**Terms and conditions apply. See website for details. Offers subject to change without notice. The exclusive discounts offered by our partner, Gift Card Savings, and cannot be applied to existing cards that have been purchased elsewhere. This eGift cannot be used online at www.morrisons.com. Personal credit cards cannot be used to purchase this product. Delivery charges apply for physical cards, up to £7.02 depending on value. u3a Click and Save is managed and run for u3a by Parliament Hill Limited.*

u3a Office in Focus



Some of the u3a office team helping out at the AGM earlier this month - not pictured is Contract Manager Alastair who was largely responsible for organising the AGM.

u3a Festival 24

u3a Festival 24 is taking place 18-20 July 2024. Find out more about the festival on [the u3a website](#).



Sport activity at u3a Festival 24

Sports are going to feature heavily at u3a Festival 24. In particular, players of Walking Cricket and New Age Kurling are planning tournaments.

In our most recent festival vlog, Trustee for the Yorkshire and Humber Margaret Fiddes visits York University to show the sports facilities that members will be using during the festival. There is the opportunity for members and group

Our dedicated Festival update is coming soon - if you would like to receive specific emails about u3a Festival 24, please email festival@u3a.org.uk.

Spotlight On:



Barry, East Suffolk u3a

I took an A Level in Computer Science in the late 1960's and later in my career, taught Computer Science to teenagers. It was while teaching that I first became aware of AI developments.

In the Spring of 2023 I renewed my acquaintance with AI so I could talk to family without being left behind by technology. In the summer, I developed an "AI for beginners" online library for East Suffolk u3a. It became very popular, with over a thousand reader visits in the first few months. We're hoping to make that available to u3a members nationally.

If you use a smartphone, there is AI somewhere - as soon as you're using voice assistance technology or satellite navigation, you're using AI.

I've started to research and meet other AI groups within u3a. There are probably a dozen or so groups discussing how AI works. My approach is to encourage members to have a go at using AI. It's convincing, it makes you think

amazing what it can do.

I am passionate about “AI for All”. We have learnt to safely use the Internet, Satnav, Smartphones. Now it is time to learn how to use AI safely.

To u3a members interested in learning more about using AI, I would say: you have to just have a go. I'd suggest talking to ChatGPT - it's great for generating ideas - or creating images using Bing Image Generator. It is great fun.

Barry is our first ever Subject Adviser for AI. Find resources about AI on [his Subject Advice page](#).