

u3a

Newsletter

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



From not being able to play a chord to preparing for a live performance 🎸

Barnsley u3a's Beginner Guitar group were all new to the instrument in January - and they're already getting ready to perform to 300 members in June

February ❤️

Recently I was told about a discussion on the future of Britain in 2023. It focused on what was needed to make a difference in these very uncertain times.

It was argued that one of the key indicators of success was whether a sense of community and common ground could be fostered, so that there was a culture of trying to make a difference together.

It struck me how at its best the u3a movement is an example of this, and how making a difference in the future can be in our collective hands.

There are always updates from u3as about what they do together and what they do for their communities, this newsletter being no different and shows the significant impact that u3as continue to make.

With very best wishes

Sam Mauger

CEO of the Third Age Trust

In this issue...

Cook for the King

Dickie Bird: Cricket and u3a

Learning German at 100

Bitesize Newsletter

[Download the Bitesize Newsletter](#)

A Letter to u3a from the King



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

20th February, 2023

To: All at u3a

The King has asked me to thank you for your messages in the Book of Condolence which was sent following the death of His Majesty's beloved mother, Queen Elizabeth II.

The King was greatly touched by your kindness in expressing your sympathy and profound gratitude to The late Queen for her extraordinary life of service. His Majesty has asked me to send you his warmest thanks and very best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

Correspondence Secretary



We received this letter and photo from the King this week. Our book of condolence had more than 600 messages from across the movement. You can read it on our [latest news page](#).

Learning Across the Movement



Cook for the King

Following a wonderful suggestion from a member on how to mark the forthcoming Coronation in May - we are launching a new event -

'Cook for the King'

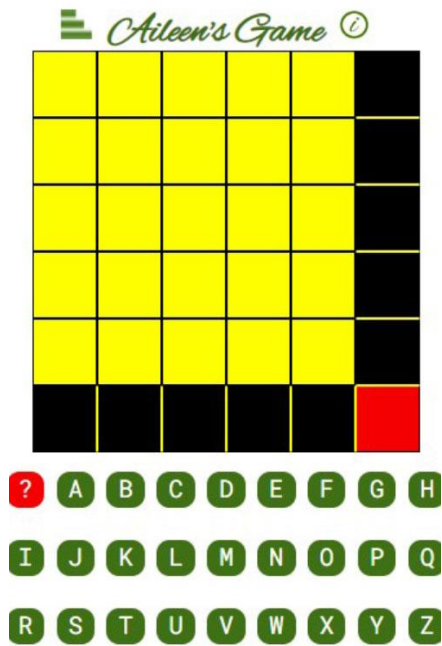
We would like you to create a dish that celebrates and reflects Britain in 2023. You could consider King Charles III's campaigning on sustainable farming practices or something that celebrates the diversity in British cuisine today - but it is up to you - please be as creative as you wish.

We would love the u3a movement to find the dish of 2023 and we aim to send all the recipes to the Palace.

Please see more details and how to submit your recipes (and any pictures you have of the cooked dish) on [the Events page](#) on our website. This initiative ends on 10 April.

You can see more recipes for a coronation in TAM next month with our regular cookery writer - Beverley

If you have a royal connection or story to tell please let us know as we would love to share these.



A New Word Challenge

Aileen's Game is a new word challenge for u3a members to get stuck into. It was created by Ian, from East Suffolk u3a - named in memory of his Mum, Aileen. The challenge is to create as many words as possible within a five letter grid - and the twist is that every other letter is picked for you.

The challenge updates daily - so have a go now on [our learning pages](#). Share your score with members of your u3a and with us at learning@u3a.org.uk to enter the u3a leader board.



Swans - the Symbol of Love

Did you know that Swans are thought to be the symbol of love as they mate for

life? You can find out more about these beautiful birds and much more (including Pickleball and u3a Speaker Swap) in this month's [u3a Radio Podcast](#).

You can listen to this on [the u3a YouTube channel](#) and also on podcasting platforms including [Apple](#) and [Spotify](#).

Do you have experience in radio or in interviewing people? We would love to have new people join the u3a radio team. If you're interested email communications@u3a.org.uk

This is a snapshot of the [learning initiatives](#) - see more on our website

Your Stories

We asked members for suggestions on what additional Interest Groups they would like and established interest in each suggestion - there were 23 suggestions and interest varied from 30+ down to one only!

After two preliminary meetings, a small, but enthusiastic, Genealogy Group was formed in January with joint group leaders. The group has already reached a membership of 14 by the time of the first meeting.

*John, Secretary at Halesowen u3a
See full story on our u3a blog, [Sources](#).*

News from The Trust

Birdsong in Battersea



Those of us in the u3a movement who can travel easily to Battersea in London have an opportunity to help develop an important app for hearing loss.

We need you to test out a prototype app for us by taking a digital walk in the woods and listening to different types of birdsong and sounds of nature. Creative designer Tom Woods - working with our partners the Design Age Institute - is developing the app to help the eight million people in the UK that have undiagnosed hearing loss.

If you would like to know more, and have some time to give on 1

**March between 2 and 4.30pm and can get to London, please let
Trustee Sandi Rickerby know at sandi.rickerby@u3a.org.uk**

Challenge North Tyne is a programme to develop solutions that better meet the needs of older people with a number of organisations putting forward ideas for this challenge. These include electric bicycles tours and physical aids to make opening bottles easier.

We now need a focus group of u3a members to discuss and give feedback. If you have some time spare on 15th March and can get to central Newcastle - we would love you to join us.

Please contact Sandi Rickerby to find out more.

u3a Off the Wall

Off the Wall is a u3a member event taking place on the day of, and the weeks leading up to, **10 May 2023**. Find out more on [the u3a website](#).



Thank you to the many of you who have signed up already to take part in our u3a Festival of Learning - u3a Off the Wall.

Member Ann Keating who is helping organise the event said "We are hoping that a few more interest groups from local u3as will step forward to take part on the day, especially if you are a photography or art group."

As well as the face-to-face events on **10 May**, there is a packed programme of [online events](#) in the run up to the day including an art competition. [Find out how you can get involved](#).

Your Stories

After an initial wild surge of interest in a long list of possible additional groups as suggested by members, we are starting 2023 with four quite diverse new groups: Gardening, Badminton, German and Dancing.

Badminton has already proved very popular with around 12 enthusiastic players meeting each week. The dancers and new German language speakers are gaining interest and the gardeners in our midst have met to share their common interest in their own little patches of living world. With a total of 35 activity groups at present we are looking forward to a great 2023 here in the heart of Dorset.

Christine, Chair of Blandford & District u3a

u3a News

Every newsletter, we share news from your u3as. Whatever you're doing, we want to know about it - [get in touch](#)



Dartmouth u3a Show Art

Dartmouth u3a art group held its first public exhibition.

Leslie from the group said, "We are a mixed bunch of enthusiast artists who now have time to enjoy exploring our creative talents and are always up for a challenge."

"The best thing about the exhibition was the pride and confidence it

engendered in each of the members. They were so delighted to hear words of praise from friends and other u3a members and to have some of their work purchased."



u3as Plant a Lasting Legacy

Members from across the movement have been planting trees to mark the u3a 40th Anniversary.

Olton u3a

[Olton and District u3a](#) members planted a birch tree in a local Solihull park.

Cliff Villages (Lincoln) u3a

[Cliff Villages \(Lincoln\) u3a](#), have planted several trees in a number of local villages. Many members also contributed to the making of a quilt.

Plymouth u3a

Volunteers from [Plymouth u3a](#) planted over 500 trees on National Trust land in Plymbridge Woods on the outskirts of the city. [BBC Spotlight](#), the region's news and magazine outlet, sent their reporter John Henderson to cover the event and BBC Radio Devon provided regular updates on their news bulletins, and they also featured in [the Plymouth Chronicle](#).

See more stories on our u3a blog [Sources](#).



Malvern u3a - a Celebratory Picnic

[Malvern u3a's](#) long-awaited 40th Anniversary picnic took place at the Edinburgh Dome in Malvern with 75 members attended the celebration. Refreshments, music (including from the recorder group and bagpipes) accompanied members

who brought their own picnics.



Walking through Nature

[Haywards Heath u3a](#) nature walks group wanted to share their latest walk and the pleasure of the exquisite scent of winter heliotropes, very common in Mid-Sussex. Peter from the group said, "We looked for other plants in flower and found the female stigmas and male catkins of hazel trees. Wind pollinated, no petals or scent are needed to attract insects: just the bare, tiny red stigmas stick out of the buds to catch pollen. So tiny, they are often over looked.

The above photo of hazel stigma is from Cuckfield 2013.



u3a quilted hearts

[Duns and District u3a](#)'s Arts and Crafts group have created quilted hearts which they plan to leave around the local community for strangers to find and brighten their day.

Loving Cricket, Walking Cricket and u3a

Cricketing legend and honorary member of Barnsley u3a, Dickie Bird OBE, wanted to talk to you all in our newsletter community.

"As I approach my 90th Birthday, I will still be out and about health permitting enjoying cricket related activities.

I am reminded that last year I visited a fantastic women's match of Walking Cricket in the indoor centre at Headingley. Now this is a fantastic game for older people, developed by Yorkshire Cricket Foundation in partnership with u3a.

I know that there is now planned the very first Walking Cricket County match, Yorkshire V Worcestershire, 15 June at Monk Bretton Cricket Club in Barnsley. I will be there!

Yes there are Test Matches, County Matches, The new 100 etc, but it is also great to know that semi-retired and retired men and women are also engaged in our beloved sport of cricket across our wonderful County of Yorkshire."

News from the Board

Liz Thackray, Chair of the Third Age Trust

A few days ago I received a fascinating email outlining some research into the brains of 'older people'. I learned that absent-mindedness and forgetfulness are due to overabundance of information and those of us between 60 and 80 are at the peak of our mental and emotional potential. Cheering news for all of us!

The last 3 years have been challenging. Sitting in a sunny window and planning a holiday for the first time since covid prevented our planned adventure in 2020, **I am very much aware that we are all in different places on our post-pandemic journey.** Some have already embraced life as it was pre-pandemic while others remain cautious. Some of us have somehow avoided covid while others are continuing to suffer its effects and others have bounced back from one or more infections.

For us as u3a members there is an urge both to look ahead to new opportunities but also a desire to return to old familiar ways of doing things. **What are the things we have learned and done differently over the past 3 years that we want to retain?** Which activities do we want to reinstate? Are there things we now want to do differently?

The national summer schools are not returning, but regional summer schools are being promoted. What is clear from the response to change is that there is no way of pleasing all the people all the time. But too much looking backwards can mean we fail to move forwards.

So if we really are at the best level in our lives, as the research study suggests, what are we wanting to do ensure all the good things are still ahead of us...

Thank you to the 254 u3as that responded to the survey asking whether or not your u3a would be likely to participate in a National Conference in August this year. Of those responding 66% indicated that they would be unlikely to participate and just 82 u3as indicated that they might, with only 63 u3as able to meet the expenses of sponsoring a delegate. On this basis, the Board has taken the decision not to hold an annual conference in 2023 as it is clear that there is little appetite for such an event.

North West Region 2023 Summer School

15 August – 18 August

University of Cumbria - CA1 2HH

Applications are now open for the NW Region Summer School - an opportunity to learn in the inspiring setting of historical Carlisle.

See all the details and download an application form on the [North West Region Events website](#).

Subject Advice News



Immerse yourself in British History for a day

There is an estimated 2,000+ u3a interest groups across the movement covering aspects of British history including ancient, medieval, modern, social, economic, political and military.

British History Subject Adviser Ian said, "Platforms like Zoom mean that we can connect across geographical boundaries and could be sharing our research with a wider u3a audience.

"If you are interested in helping develop and contribute to a British History Study Day in 2023 contact me at ian.mccannah@u3a.org.uk"



Learning More About: US and UK Politics with Subject Adviser Paul

How did you first become interested in US politics?

I graduated in Politics and Economics in 1970 before embarking on a career with industry which was preceded by my first visit to the US for the summer when Richard Nixon beat Hubert Humphrey to the White House. I was bitten by the bug of the US political scene and have maintained close study of it ever since, helped by many visits to the US on both work and leisure. This has led me to give talks to several large and small u3a groups about how the US elects its politicians.

What kind of topics could you discuss within a u3a group?

The subject is broad and is fascinating with many topics for u3a exploration, you may be interested in the shape of democracies, the role of the president, the elections, how Presidents are elected, the role of political parties, Constitutions, Heads of State. Equally of interest may be to follow the US elections in 2024.

How can you help u3a members or groups to start or progress their group?

I am a new Subject Adviser and am keen on helping members grow their interest in the politics of US and the UK. There are so many differences and open for exploration and research with vast material for u3as to explore, research learn and have fun discussions. Do contact me if you are already a group or if you would like a starting point.

Contact Paul and find out more on [the US and UK Politics Subject Advice page](#).

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

Your Stories

I know there are many wine tasting groups. I'm not a lover of white or rose and I said "Why isn't there a red wine only tasting group?" Our group met for their first meeting of the New Year where members enjoyed 6 excellent wines from South Africa, Portugal, California, Spain, Chile and Italy.

There were also four new faces at this meeting and all enjoyed meeting new people and swapping tales of loves, lives, careers and families!! This group has a regular attendance of between 24-33 folk and of those over 80% have been coming back regularly.

*Chris, Group Leader of LORDY & me (Little Old Red Drinker you & me),
Southport u3a*

National Events

Here is a snapshot of some of the interesting events for members that are coming soon. You can book onto all of these events on the [online events page](#).



An Introduction to Pilates

Thursday 2 March, 10am

Brighton and Hove u3a member Ginny will teach you the principles of Pilates and a selection of standard exercises.



Genetic Genealogy: Making It Work For You

Wednesday 8 March, 2pm

In this intermediate/advanced talk, Toni of Hawkwell Village u3a will show you how to use autosomal DNA match results to prove your family tree.

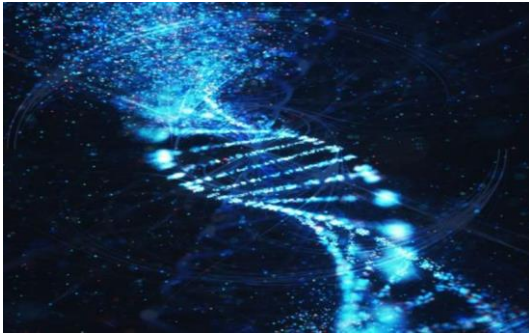


For the Love of a Woman

Thursday 9 March, 10am

Join Catherine from Newcastle u3a for this talk looking at a dynamic and powerful painting by William Holman

Hunt.



Life on the Edge: The dawn of quantum biology, with Jim Al-Khalili

Friday 17 March, 12pm

Join Jim Al-Khalili CBE FRS, Professor of Physics at the University of Surrey, and one of Britain's best-known science communicators.



u3a has joined forces with the British Heart Foundation to spread the word on their new RevivR app - where you can learn CPR in 15 minutes. Find out more on the [BHF website](#) and read more about it in this month's Third

Age Matters.

Pictured: British Heart Foundation meets u3a members in Northern Ireland

Social Media News

Do you want us to showcase your social media in this newsletter? [Email us](#) or tag us in your posts - click the icons below to find our social media profiles.



From Ayr u3a - Some of the items our Craft group are making for Queen Elizabeth University Hospital. If anyone would like the patterns get in touch.

[#craft](#) [#u3a](#) [#brainhealth](#)

The u3a Scotland Twitter page showcases the activities of u3as across Scotland, including this recent project from Ayr u3a. Find out more on [u3a Scotland's Twitter page](#), and follow the main u3a social media pages by clicking the buttons below.



Sources

Lyndhurst u3a member Mike spent his career as a cartoonist - and now he has a passion for creating lifelike bird sculptures, like the one pictured. On our Sources blog this month, he shares his top tips to creating artwork.



There are lots more member-led stories on [our u3a blog, Sources.](#)

Media News

An article about the winner of the u3a creative writing competition, Gilwern u3a member Harriet and her u3a writing group, featured in the Civil Service Pensioner's Alliance magazine.

Richard from Glenfield u3a appeared in the [Leicester Mercury](#) - see Richard in our Spotlight on.

Todmorden u3a's new walking cricket group featured in [the Halifax Courier.](#)

Your Stories

Royston u3a were taken on a journey of festive hits by music fan Martin Orkin. In our December meeting, he shared some of the songs that have dominated the Christmas charts - from White Christmas by Bing Crosby, which has sold a staggering 50 million copies, to She Loves You by the Beatles which was in the charts for three months and number one for most of December 1963, and Merry Christmas Everybody by Slade.

Jacquie, Royston u3a

Social Impact

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



Agile Ageing Alliance and u3a

Please see Sam's [keynote](#) presentation at an Agile Ageing Alliance Leaders Forum. You can also watch [Co-Creating a Multigenerational Neighbourhood “It’s Not a Polite Process”](#)

The Future of Ageing

Future Lives is excited to announce that David Sinclair, CEO of the International Longevity Centre, will be our next guest speaker. **On 24 March, David will be sharing his insights about the future of ageing. Don't miss it.**

Register on the [Future Lives webpage](#).

Our friends at the Centre for Ageing Better have added over 700 new images to their [image library](#) which is free for anyone to access.

You can see the u3a movement's image library and all our merchandise and resources on our [u3a Brand Centre](#). Please use your Brand Centre login or create one to access it.

Services and Offers

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



Save on your Fuel and Food at Morrisons

Have you signed up to our [u3a Click and Save Scheme?](#) This scheme gives friends and members of the newsletter access to a range of discounts on leading brands - such as 4% off your shop at Morrisons.

You can save on your weekly grocery shop, clothing and technology with a Morrisons Gift Card or eGift Card* and at Morrisons 339 petrol stations located throughout the UK.

**Terms and conditions apply. See website for details. Offers subject to change without notice. The exclusive discounts are 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 £6.95 depending on value. u3a Click and Save is managed and run for u3a by Parliament Hill Limited.*

Your Stories

To mark Remembrance Week, we were joined by the well-known Antiques Roadshow Presenter, Mark Smith, who gave a very interesting and informative talk on World War One.

He was happy to do a full Q & A session during which several members asked him about the war service of their family members and showed him some service medals.

Throughout the afternoon, Mark was enthusiastic and engaging, sharing with us his wealth of specialist knowledge.

Ann, Buckhurst Hill u3a



Progress report on Siteworks

The project team want to keep you up to date each month on our progress to replace Sitebuilder websites with SiteWorks.

More than 70 volunteers have joined the new SiteWorks web team bringing a wide range of experience including project management, program coding, testing, training and communications.

The final design of the new website, which has similar functionality to the current SiteBuilder website, is now built and is being tested.

You can see all the latest on the new [SiteWorks](#) website which is now live.

Anyone wishing to volunteer to support the project please contact us at info@siteworks.u3a.org.uk

Beacon Training

There are now 538 u3as on Beacon - a growing number - and the Beacon Team of volunteers has a group dedicated to providing Training for existing Beacon users.

Over the months to June there are 15 courses running - aimed at key tasks associated with various u3a roles including Site Administrators, Group Coordinators (Conveners), Membership Secretaries and Treasurers

John from the Beacon team said, "One key benefit according to the feedback is the opportunity to chat with members carrying out the same role at up to 30 other u3as around the country. We will advertise all these courses as they become available".

If you are not a beacon user and you want to find out more about the system please contact info@u3a.beacon.org.uk

u3a Office In Focus

This section puts a spotlight on the staff who work at u3a office and what we're doing.



Meet Nelly

I'm the Communications Officer at u3a. This covers a lot of areas including the u3a social media platforms, writing news stories for our website, sourcing member-written articles for our u3a blog Sources, and organising photoshoots and films to reflect the vibrancy of the u3a movement.

One of my favourite responsibilities is putting together this u3a national newsletter every month. Receiving your stories of what you're doing at your u3a, or what the movement means to you is such an interesting part of my job. And I always look forward to hearing what you think - we always have a huge response to every email we send out and it's wonderful to have such a connected community of u3a members.

If you have an interesting story to share, please do get in touch with me at communications@u3a.org.uk

Your Stories

Newport u3a is celebrating its 30th Anniversary this year but last spring we learnt that we had to vacate our headquarters where we hold all our groups' sessions.

Members had been involved in a Charity Concert for Ukraine with the local Playgoers Society and they welcomed us with open arms. We now rent a suite of five rooms in the Dolman Theatre. u3a members installed Wi-Fi, audio-visual equipment, shelving and storage for all our equipment and a piano.

Now we are in the city centre, our membership continues to grow plus we now have 42 subject groups. We can learn, laugh and live hopefully for another 30 years.

Angela, Newport u3a

Advice News

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



Workshops

Contingency planning for your u3a

Have you thought about what you and your committee might need to do if a fellow committee member was unavailable at short notice? Would someone else have access to the relevant information and be able to step in to cover if needed?

If not, you might want to think about **contingency planning**. Not only will this help your committee to have plans in but will also help with succession

planning.

Insurance cover

The u3a insurance broker will be delivering a workshop at the end of March about u3a insurance, what it covers and additional information about other areas such as cybercrime.

If you would like to join either of these sessions please sign up on the [u3a website](#)

Spotlight On



Richard, Glenfield u3a

Richard is a former prisoner of war who was shot down over Belgium in World War II. Richard joined Glenfield u3a in Leicestershire when he was 92 with his late wife Joan. He became a member of several interest groups, including German speaking. He said: “My desire with joining the German interest group was to understand the language and the people, after my experience.

The u3a is a lifeline for me. I can't emphasise enough how important it has been for my wellbeing.”

Newlywed Richard was part of No 613 Squadron, which was tasked with low-level night flying to destroy trains, tanks and buildings around St Vith in the Battle of the Bulge. On Christmas Eve, 1944, the de Havilland DH.98 Mosquito which he was navigating was intercepted by a Luftwaffe Junker Ju 88 – which Richard described with characteristic understatement as “very bad timing.”

A burst of fire penetrated the cockpit, injuring Richard's legs and shredding the controls. Richard and pilot Ken Baird bailed out and landed safely, but Richard was picked up by a German patrol and taken to various prison camps. Finally, he was released by Allied forces at Moosburg.

Richard revealed that living in the camps was mostly boring but sometimes he worked in the kitchen or hospital. The camp inmates were aware the war was coming to an end and he didn't encounter any violence.

Richard was also awarded the National Order of the Legion of Honour, the highest French order of merit for military and civilians, in 2018.

An avid cricket fan and player, he was a member of the Local Umpires Association for 34 years and was awarded life membership of the England and Wales Cricket Board's Association of Cricket Officials. Richard also belongs to the u3a gardening and history groups but describes the Glenfield u3a luncheon group as the most fun.

“The reason I enjoy u3a so much is the extreme level of friendliness and cooperation within the movement. Since I reached 100, help from other members has been instantaneous. No matter which groups I've been in there's been support available. If there's some tricky steps on a garden visit, there's always a helping hand. There's a desire within u3a to make new people feel at home.”

This is an easy way to share the newsletter. Click this [link](#) and copy and paste the URL to share on other platforms, including Beacon.