

NEWSBITES

Nottinghamshire Network of u3as

DECEMBER 2023

MESSAGE FROM CHRIS NIVEN, CHAIR OF THE NOTTS NETWORK

Season's Greetings everyone,

I hope everyone is well and getting ready for the festive season.

A few things to update you about. First of all, we have agreed a date and venue for our 2024 Conference. The date for your diaries is Saturday 21st September. We have booked Nottingham Girls' High School as our venue. Their theatre "The Space" has a large auditorium plus several breakout rooms for smaller workshops. The planning for the event is going well and we have secured Charles Hanson from the Antiques Roadshow and other television programmes as our keynote speaker. I will update you with further information when we have confirmation.

For your Network representatives, news about our January meeting. This meeting will be a hybrid meeting. Liz Thackray, Chair of the Third Age Trust is coming along via Zoom to talk to the meeting about the ongoing changes and how Nottinghamshire Network and the East Midlands region can participate in the discussions. Zoom will also be available to any other reps who are unable to join us in person. Your Network representatives will be able to feedback to you.

Finally, some of you will probably be aware that I was on East Midlands on Friday 24th November. They had specifically asked for a representative from the u3a so at least we know they have heard of us! The topic was regarding the proposed withdrawal of concessionary travel on public transport, in particular the tram. If you haven't participated in the Nottingham consultation yet, please do so. Details here: Tram concessionary pass consultation | Nottinghamshire County Council

I hope you all have a lovely Christmas and a happy and healthy 2024.

Best wishes Chris



A REPORT FROM YOUR REGIONAL TRUSTEE

Since my last newsletter in July, there has certainly been a great deal of discussion by the TAT Board and the Pilot Council of the so-called Fit for the Future proposals.

I think by now everyone is familiar with the existing structure of the membership of TAT being all of the u3as in the UK, the Board of Directors consisting of the National Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer (elected by the whole membership) and the twelve Regional and National Trustees (elected by the u3as in their regions or nations) and the six standing advisory committees, all reporting to the Board, and everyone will also be familiar with the role of the Pilot Council and also the current proposals and the reasons advanced for them.

Fuller details including a timeline for implementation were recently released, including the winding-down of all six committees and a "communication/marketing exercise" running since September 2023 until March 2024.

Key features of the proposals which have now emerged are that the proposed new Board will consist of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, u3a Council Chair, the Chair of Third Age Trust Trading Limited and 4–5 others recruited and elected from the u3a membership as having relevant skills/backgrounds.

If approved by the Board in June 2024, resolutions will be proposed at the 2024 AGM. If they are passed, they will be implemented between October 2024 and the 31st March 2025.

The current Board will disband on the 31st March 2025, and the existing Regional / National Trustees will be required on the 1st April to choose either to transition to the u3a Council or to seek nomination and election to the new Board on the basis of the skills they possess.

Everyone should have received a mailout in November asking for topics, questions and ideas to be included in the agenda for meetings of the Pilot Council via Zoom on the 13th December or in person on the 28th February. Some may think the December deadline was too short bearing in mind the need to discuss the proposals in committee.

Everything I do and say as your Regional Trustee is driven by you, and I need to know what you think of these proposals before deciding whether I should support them as being in the interests of members in the East Midlands.

Key questions for me are whether the replacement of the existing Board structure of 12 Regional / National Trustees and 3 others with one representative of the u3a Council and 8 / 9 others would be a sensible or beneficial change, how the wishes of the members would be represented and carried into effect and whether the scheme will solve the perceived problems of overload and inefficiency of the management. Now is the time for the members to make their voices heard about these far-

reaching and radical proposals and to shape the policies and governance of the u3a movement for many decades to come. Now is definitely not the time for u3as and networks to falter or give up hope.

I am here to represent your interests to the Board, so please feel free to contact me to discuss any questions or comments.

John Lewis
East Midlands Regional Trustee
E-mail john.lewis@u3a.org.uk
Mobile / text 07428 418 777

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE NETWORK OF u3as

Notts Network Conference - Saturday 21 September 2024

All-day conference open to all members

Learn, Laugh, Live - join us for a fun day at

"The Space" theatre, Nottingham Girls' High School,

9 Arboretum Street, NG1 4JB

Keynote speaker: Charles Hanson, auctioneer and television personality

Followed by interest group taster sessions

Save the date in your diaries!

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF NEWSBITES 7th February 2024 Please keep to a maximum 300-word count Please send good quality photographs as separate attachments. Email to: maria.newsbites@gmail.com

RETFORD u3a

We arranged the Open Afternoon to celebrate with our members and to raise awareness of the u3a in Retford and surrounding villages. We hoped this would lead to an increase in new members joining our u3a.



On two market days prior to the Open Afternoon members handed out leaflets about the event and informed many people about the u3a both nationally and locally. A high proportion of shoppers were not local, but they travel to the town as they love the market and local shops. It was very good to hear how well the town is considered. They were interested in what goes on and would consider checking if there was a group in their locality.

A meeting room at Retford library was selected for the afternoon as it is closer to the town and we were able to provide free refreshments too – it's always appreciated.

Nearly half of our groups were represented there, and it was great to see the variety of interests that members can pursue in our u3a. Visitors chatted to group leaders and members and were able to look at the videos, displays and materials that were brought along. There was a real buzz in the room, with about 100 visitors coming along.



We had five new members sign up there and then, and about 20 more people took our information packs away. Some groups gained new members from the day, and as a result we have the potential for a new Book Group and a new Wine Appreciation group to be set up.

These groups were represented:

- * Book Group 3
- * Brush up your French
- * Creative Writing
- * Current Affairs
- Cycling with Bob and his bike!
- * French Conversation
- * Fun with Flowers with a lovely display
- * Gardening with inspiring video of garden visits
- * Military History
- Painting and Watercolour Painting groups with a fantastic PowerPoint display of paintings from the group
- * Patchwork and Quilting beautiful bunting
- * Philosophy
- Photography a great photo display
- * Poetry
- * Singing
- * Snooker
- * Walking Groups x 3





The Open Afternoon was a great event, and the team effort really made it work. It was a lovely way to celebrate all we have to offer with members and visitors alike. We think we met the aims of raising our profile and of increasing the membership.

Pippa Ramsay Chair

STAPLEFORD & DISTRICT u3a

40th anniversary of the u3a movement

On Tuesday 3rd October 2023 Hazel (Chair) and Sandra (vice Chair) attended the planting ceremony of "Fairfield Academy's Micro Forest" on the playing field used by the school. Supervised by the staff and assisted by Stapleford's Mayor Ross Bofinger and other councillors, an enthusiastic crowd of pupils from the school planted small saplings of native trees, 30 in total.

Teachers explained how the tiny "whips" will mature into a wild-life friendly copse, absorbing carbon dioxide, releasing oxygen and providing a precious haven for insects and birds.

Stapleford u3a decided to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the u3a movement by donating a third of the trees, but it has taken a while for the saplings to be ready.



Interest Groups

On Friday 24th November, Stapleford & District u3a's Ukelele group were invited by the Town Mayor to perform at a coffee morning in the Town Hall with proceeds going to his chosen charity, Broxtowe Youth Homelessness. They entertained visitors for 45 minutes with a wide variety of music ending, of course with "We wish you a Merry Christmas".

A new Interest Group has been added to Stapleford's repertoire of board games. There is already a popular Trivial Pursuit Group, and now enthusiasts can also enjoy monthly sessions of Scrabble and Rummikub.

Christmas Celebration

And on 6th December, a thoroughly enjoyable social meeting celebrated Christmas, with a bountiful raffle, lavish refreshments donated by members, many dressed in seasonal outfits, and entertainment by the Singing Group and the now well-known Ukelele Group. A joyous poem by Vera captured all she loves about Christmas,



while a poignant reading by Trevor contrasted post-war and modern childhood Christmases in the UK, subtly reminding the audience of parallels between the flight of Jesus' family to protect their child and that of a refugee child from Ukraine today. Stapleford & District Ukelele Group (known as "Los Pensionatas") wait their turn as members join in with the Singers' varied repertoire of seasonal and traditional music.



Stapleford & District u3a Ukelele Group help raise funds on 24th November for Broxtowe Youth Homelessness

Hazel Stenson & Marion Edwards
Chair Business Secretary

BEESTON u3a

Craft Club

A very peaceful Beeston u3a Craft Club in July, with all members hand sewing their own version of felt sunflowers. Everyone was given the same raw materials – it was lovely to see so much variation in the final results.





Beeston u3a publicity

We had a great day on Beeston Square market in September at our u3a stall, engaging with the public, chatting with existing and potentially new Beeston u3a members and celebrating national u3a week.

Thanks are due to everyone who helped and visited, including Mayor Teresa Cullen.



We find this an effective way of reaching out to our wider community, once a year, during National u3a week.

Group Fair/Encouraging Volunteering

Our membership team, Alison and Felicity, proved to be a very welcoming sight when existing members and potentially new ones arrived at the Beeston u3a Group Fair, in October. In a very busy morning, most of our 100 Group Facilitators engaged with visitors from 10 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.

The Committee used this event to run a campaign to drum up some more volunteers to help with our various activities, with whatever time and resource people might have spare. Some adapted rosettes did the trick to help spread the message!



Karen Attwood Publicity Officer



MANSFIELD u3a

Yet another highly successful venture by Dukeries & District, Forest Town & District and Mansfield & District. One hundred and forty u3a members partied the night away on Friday 27th September in the spirit of true friendship between the three u3as.

The Clipstone Welfare Hall was filled with a colourful array of costumes amongst them was an abundance of Witches, Zombies, Ghosts, Mummies and Ghouls – as well as various other characters.

The Moonshiners Duo (an appropriate name considering the full moon was prominent in the night sky) played an incredible selection of music from the 50s, 60s and 70s which had people toe tapping and dancing creating a night to remember.









Delicious Pie and Peas were served up by a dedicated catering staff. Thank you to all those who helped to make the night a success and a huge thank you to all the u3a members who made a fabulous effort in creating Halloween characters.

Life doesn't end with retirement - it's just the beginning with the u3a!

Katheryn Henshaw Business Secretary

WORKSOP & DISTRICT u3a

Worksop & District u3a have two Sewing Groups who each meet twice a month. We have been busy producing handmade items for Project Linus. Project Linus provides quilts to children who are sick, disabled, disadvantaged or distressed.

We handed over around 16 quilts earlier this year and have another seven nearly completed. We have also made 40 Christmas Stockings which are given to the children with a selection box inside.





The handmade items are distributed through our local Project Linus organiser to children in the Bassetlaw area.

This year we have undertaken an experiment and run a series of one-off events. We felt that there was a demand for some sessions that didn't lend themselves to a regular group and also, we wanted to trial some things that might become a group if there was enough demand.

We have a regular monthly booking at a local Community Centre. Afternoons are led by our members, so costs are kept to a minimum – typically £2 for the afternoon which includes refreshments.

Our first session was a Scrabble afternoon, and we now have a monthly Scrabble group running as a result of this. We have also started a Tabletop Games group after a well-attended one-off session.

Our other sessions have included an introduction to Patchwork and Quilting and Scrappy Christmas Wreaths.

Our next afternoon in November is a Quirky Quiz afternoon.

After Christmas we are repeating the Patchwork and Quilting afternoon as demand for the first one exceeded places available.

We are also planning a chess afternoon which we hope will turn into a monthly group.









Sheila Massey Speaker Finder

RAINWORTH & DISTRICT u3a



Rainworth & District u3a have had a very active couple of months. The National Trust

Group visited Snowshill Manor in the Cotswolds as their last outing of the year.

The Strollers strolled from Welbeck Garden Centre to Cresswell Crags and back again for their October stroll, sadly Novembers stroll around Vicar Water was called off because of heavy rain so we strolled from the car park to Rumbles for coffee and bacon cobs!



The luncheon club had a well-supported visit to the Hutt in Ravenshead.



We also celebrated our 10th Anniversary. The party was well attended and we celebrated with cake, sherry and a very polished performance by The Ringtones.

The raffle, appropriately based on tin, raised money for funds. Local Councillor Tom Smith joined us for the celebrations.





On the same day we congratulated member Margaret Carter on reaching her 90th birthday and surprised her with a cake!

The card group, appropriately, made Christmas cards at their November meeting.

We were very grateful to the Manager at Sainsburys on Nottingham Road for allowing us to have a "Pop Up" stand at the entrance to the store which created a bit of interest. Surprisingly some people had not heard of u3a but the information given by the members obviously impressed as we now have some new members!

The book group reviewed a couple of books the latest being "The Co-Ops got bananas" by Hunter Davies telling of his life in the 40/50s in the North West. This brought back memories for some of our members.



The History group rounded off the year with a fuddle and a quiz of mystery objects provided by Newark Museum.

The Quiz and Bowling teams continue to enjoy their outings.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all from Rainworth u3a.

Colin and Jackie

RUDDINGTON u3a

Membership

Our membership has now reached 179 which is a new record!

A successful funding bid

We were delighted to be chosen as a Coop Local Community Fund cause over the last year. As the presentation cheque shows we received £2170.81 which is a significant boost to our finances and all the committee were smiling. During the coming 12 months we will be using the money we have received to support our members with their Health and Wellbeing through various activities and events. Some of the money will support



our costs for the hire of the Methodist Church for our monthly meetings. It will also enable us to provide speakers on various subjects that support Health and Wellbeing. In June next year we will be organising an information event which will be open to all members and non members.

Recycling

We have started supporting the recycling of (empty) medicine tablet blister packs which have a metal foil top. With a mature membership they accumulate quickly! These are collected from members at monthly meetings. They go to Keyworth Abundance who have links with two recycling initiatives: Superdrug for combined plastic and foil packs and a local church if just plain foil.

Travellers' Tales

The November topic was Mediterranean Islands.

As usual there was a wide variety of tales which included a Corfu honeymoon hike to Glyfada beach which was "more like an Outward Bound course" and the bull jumping feats of Minoan men in Knossos, a Bronze Age archaeological site in Crete known for its association with the Greek myth of Theseus and the minotaur.

However, the most amazing, and gruesome story, told by Mike & Sue Wynn, was of a

visit to a 17th century convent on Ischia, an island in the Bay of Naples, where an order of nuns lived. It involved death and decay. If you have the stomach for it google the cemetery of the Poor Clares.





Peter Davison

NEWARK & DISTRICT u3a

"Singing for Fun" Group

There's a song made famous by the pop group Abba which says "Thank you for the Music" & members of Newark & District u3a's "Singing for Fun" group certainly echo those sentiments.

The group meets up monthly to trill its heart out to everything from well known, classic songs from the shows through to Caribbean calypsos & takes in songs such as "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" performed in rounds along the way.



Throughout year the group is invited by local organisations such as residential care homes, to go along to entertain their clients. Christmas is an especially busy time for the group and it's such a privilege to see the smiles on the elderly residents' faces, as they sing along to favourites such as "Red, Red Robin" & "Walking in a Winter Wonderland".

Whilst we may not be auditioning for the "X Factor" anytime soon we would I believe, win awards for enthusiasm. Spurred on by the encouragement of the group leader

Alison, we have a song in our hearts which just has to come out. We do indeed say "Thank you for the Music"!

Maggie George

DUKERIES u3a

Dukeries u3a is looking ahead to a New Year of Learning, Laughing and Living. A new events sub-committee has been putting together a fun programme to complement the monthly members' meetings and various activity groups. Members can look forward to celebrating the Chinese New Year, a Murder Mystery Weekend and a River Trent cruise.

We had a fabulous night out at 'The Proms' together with u3a members from Warsop and Sutton in Ashfield. Flag waving was obligatory to the excellent musical programme from Shirebrook Miners Welfare Band!



Proms night



We were pleased to promote
Dukeries u3a and join with other
local groups for the Edwinstowe
Christmas Light Switch on Event.
Luckily the rain stopped just before
the event and the crowds turned up
in their hundreds.

This is one example where we are supporting the local community as well as flying the flag for our u3a movement.

Another is our decorated Christmas trees which were displayed in Edwinstowe and Ollerton churches and in Ollerton library.

Our speaker in November, Dr Steve Wallace, gave a superb presentation on the Sherwood Observatory and the James Webb telescope. It was fascinating to hear how a group of volunteers used their skills to build the observatory, including making a grinder to produce the mirrors.

Dr Wallace showed how much more information on the universe can

now be gained using the James Webb telescope in comparison to the older Hubble telescope. We are hoping to arrange a trip to the observatory soon.



Quiz night



Ramblers

January's speaker will be former pop star Vince Eager. In an illustrated presentation Vince will recall the heady days when, as a major pop star in the late 1950s & 60s he appeared on prime time television most Saturday evenings on such shows as the "Six Five Special", "Drumbeat" and "Oh Boy".

Ann Street

FOREST TOWN & DISTRICT u3a

We held our Halloween Party in October and invited Mansfield and Dukeries u3a to come along and dance to the music from The Moonshiners and enjoy a supper of Pie and Peas.



"Thank you" to everyone dressed for the occasion and these are our winners in their costumes and witches galore.





We celebrated our 8th birthday with a Birthday Bash with lots of cake and a cuppa, our own group Turn Back Time entertained us and our two unsung heroes who do a lot of behind the scenes work, Kevin and Alan cut the Birthday Cake with our Chair, Irene.



Turn Back Time: Andy, Irene, Win



Refreshment volunteers

Kathryn Cope

CALVERTON & DISTRICT u3a

In the last couple of months, our Photography for Fun group, which generally meets on the 3rd Tuesday afternoon each month, has been out on no less than three photoshoots.



Nottingham streets in September, for the theme of Urban Photography





Gravelly Hollow, Calverton in October, photographing fungi





Nottingham centre in November, attempting low-light photography, generally concentrating on creating light trails from moving vehicles. This involves having

a long shutter speed, or rather keeping your shutter open for several seconds with your camera on a tripod – a little hit & miss – hopefully 'miss' regarding the cars shooting past you pretty close by ...



We also managed a few shots of Nottingham's Winter Wonderland while we were nearby.

Ken Jones

BINGHAM u3a

Our u3a Bridge Club is one of our success stories. Starting from ground zero, two of our members, Sue and Dave Cobley, have built this club.









After two years it now has a membership of over 24 people.

Meetings are fortnightly. But the membership is so enthusiastic that Bridge is played regularly in members' homes and some have joined Bridge clubs.

Veronica Perry Chair

ARNOLD u3a

On 23rd November, 28 members sat down to a fine Christmas meal then had a super guided tour around the Great British Car Journey at Ambergate. With well over a



Cars that once belonged to Elton John and Princess Anne for example! Folks tried to spot their first car, and nostalgia was in the air! A great way to start Christmas.

hundred cars on display, our guide lan gave us the back story to some of the cars there – some still in pristine condition after one careful owner, others lovingly restored – but all with a tale to tell.











Neil Hunt

RAVENSHEAD u3a

Dog Friends Group

Over the course of 2023, a number of new activity and interest groups have been formed. Perhaps the most unusual is our Dog Friends Group.

Facilitated by Group Leader, Katy Roberts, who is also an Ambassador for the Canine Partners assistance dogs charity in Loughborough, the group meets monthly over coffee at a dog-friendly coffee shop at Portland College between Mansfield & Ravenshead, preceded by a group dog walk around the nearby Harlow Wood.

The group is already planning a visit to Crufts in March 2024, and also utilising local fenced exercise areas for off-lead dog socialising and other stimulating activities for their dogs.

Here is a gallery of some of the Doggie Cast of Characters from the group:





Dog Friends Members at Portland College Coffee Shop

There was a special moment at our November Monthly Meeting, when our oldest member, centenarian Marjorie Eyre, was in attendance to see our keynote speaker,

Paula Cornwell, deliver her talk "Mind Your Motoring Manners" in character as the

Hon. Mrs. Victor Bruce, who was a famous female racing driver in the 1920's.

Dressed in costume from the period, Paula shared some

Dressed in costume from the period, Paula shared some surprising information and tales about the quirks and realities of women driving cars on the roads in the male dominated motoring world of that period, and also her ability to compete with the



best male racing drivers in competitions on race tracks such as Brooklands.

The speaker line up for our 2024 monthly meetings have already been confirmed, starting in January with Dave Richards, with his talk 'Richard III – Mystery Man – the Bones in the Car Park', followed in February by Vince Eager and his presentation 'You're Never Too Old to Rock and Roll'.

John Butler Chair

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF NEWSBITES

Please send your articles (keep to a maximum 300-word count)

and good quality photos (as attachments please)

by 7th February 2024 to maria.newsbites@gmail.com

Many thanks to all the Nottinghamshire members who have submitted articles about their u3as. This is your newsletter and it wouldn't exist without your many contributions.

Please submit your text in Word and your photographs as separate attachments in JPG, PNG or similar format. A photograph always tells a good story!

Please keep within the 300-word count.

And if your u3a is organising an event, trip or holiday which you would like to share with other Nottinghamshire u3a members or maybe you have a few places to fill or a few tickets to sell, then this is the place to promote them.

maria.newsbites@gmail.com

NEWS FROM THE THIRD AGE TRUST

The u3a Walkers exchange

This is a new initiative and some early adventures have been undertaken by Jacky and others from Southport u3a while walking in the Peak District with Buxton u3a. In addition, other u3a's have joined the scheme and exchanges are taking place. We have a great review from Francine, Southport u3a visiting Monmouth as part of the walking exchange.

If you fancy a walking break or even a one-off walk when passing through an area, please contact the u3a Walkers exchange team outlining the area you would like to visit and the types of walks you are seeking. We will let you know if a suitable u3a is listed and who the contact is. The rest will be down to the two contacts. We have prepared some simple guidelines to help you.

We are sure the scheme will evolve when more u3as become involved and new ideas are put forward.

Please be aware - this scheme is for u3as / u3a members only

The more u3a's that register the more variety of walks will be available. So, if your u3a would like to walk some "pastures new" we encourage you to register. This will help us all.

For more information and to register please visit the Third Age Trust site here u3a - Walking

u3a Poetry Competition

Enter the u3a national poetry competition which Is back for Its fourth consecutive year, with the theme of 'What If'. For more information please visit the Trust site at News then select Learning News

u3a - u3a Poetry Competition 2023-4 theme announced

FREE ONLINE LEARNING EVENTS

Did you know that membership of your u3a entitles you to access free online talks, workshops and courses offered by The Third Age Trust? Just go to: www.u3a.org.uk
You must be registered with the Trust and logged in, a very easy and quick process. Once on the site look for these and other opportunities under 'Events'.

Most sessions are presented by members, sharing their knowledge or skills with others across the movement.

Here are just some of the exciting events coming up in the next few weeks



Mindfulness and Meditation Continuation Sessions -From December 23 - May 24

Join us each month as we continue the practices introduced in the Mindfulness and Meditation Series, and introduce new ones.

Next session: Thurs 21 Dec at 10am

Free - online via zoom



How to better insulate your home

The best and greenest ways to treat all parts of your home, where possible, for minimum heat loss, and with minimum outlay by Martyn of Southampton u3a

Thurs 4 Jan at 2pm

Free - Online via Zoom



Laughter Yoga with Judith (Jan-Jun)

Join Judith of Edinburgh u3a for monthly Laughter Yoga sessions

Next Session: Wed 10 Jan at 10am

Free - Online via Zoom



Chinese Wand Exercises for Mobility, Fitness and Fun

Sit or stand to do Ancient Chinese exercises for fitness, mobility, strength, balance using a lightweight cane and incremental movements

Fri Jan 12 and Jan 19 at 10am

Free - online via zoom



Toulouse-Lautrec and the Music Halls of Paris

Join Peter Webb for a talk on the world of Toulouse-Lautrec and eighteen-nineties Montmartre in Paris.

Thurs 18 Jan at 2pm

Free - Online via Zoom



Laughter Yoga with Merrie Maggie (Jan-Apr)

Bring more joy and laughter to your life with Laughter Yoga – an aerobic exercise with playful exercises combined with deep yogic breathing.

Next session: Tues 30 Jan at 3.30pm

Free - Online via Zoom

