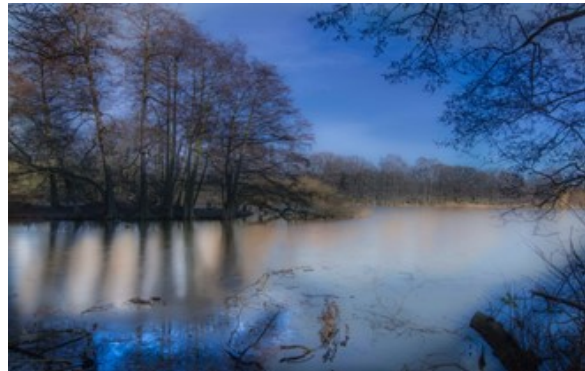


# NEWSBITES!

**February 2021**

*Sharing ideas across 34 u3as in Nottinghamshire*

February brings the rain,  
Fills the frozen lake again



Photograph of Wollaton Park Lake sent in by  
Anne Archer of Arnold u3a

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF NOTTS NETWORK

I am wondering how many of you have now had your first Covid-19 injection? My appointment is booked for next week with the second dose due in May. It is so encouraging but suggests that we are not likely to be able to meet in person for a considerable time.

Our first Notts Network meeting of the year was held on January 27<sup>th</sup> with 44 attendees and 28 of the 33 u3as represented. At this meeting we were so pleased that seven members came forward to talk to us on the topic of "Interest Groups Online". We heard about running Spanish and other languages, Ukulele, Book groups, Discussion groups, Opera, Wine tasting, Badminton and many others. In fact, as Paul Martinez says: There isn't an Interest Group out there that can't be run virtually although some require more tweaking than others. Terry Moore from Ravenshead u3a talked us through a PowerPoint about Photography for Fun which has many useful pointers ranging further than just that topic. The PowerPoint has been sent out to each u3a.

Leia Morales from the National Statistical Office spoke to us about the forthcoming National Census which will take place on March 21<sup>st</sup>. Due to Covid-19 restrictions this will be completed online but with help available for anyone who cannot do that. The PowerPoint presentation used at the Network meeting has been sent out to u3a contacts so do pass on the information and, particularly, tell those who do not have access to online services that they can phone Leia on 07452 938655 for a paper copy. Alternatively, someone can contact Leia on [leia.morales27@field.census.gov.uk](mailto:leia.morales27@field.census.gov.uk) on their behalf.

Our next Network meeting will take place on April 21<sup>st</sup> at 10.00 am and will be run on Zoom. This will not be a business meeting although if your u3a would like us to discuss a topic do email me. One topic we have already agreed to discuss further is that of Niche Interest Groups.

It is so encouraging to hear of all the inventive ways that members are finding to keep their u3as vibrant. We are pleased that sharing of ideas is taking place through the mechanism of Peer Support Groups. A new one has begun this year for treasurers and that for secretaries continues to flourish.

Best wishes to you all and continue to take care.

*Rosie Allen*

## NEWS FROM PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

**The Treasurers' Peer Support Group** held a Zoom meeting on 1st February, chaired by Malcolm Brookbanks of Beeston u3a.

The subjects discussed included:

Subscription charges in the current situation particularly for u3as that are struggling for funds. Several different scenarios were discussed. What should u3as charge if members feel they are not currently getting value for money? Difficulties have also arisen because of when renewals take place. The necessity for budgeting to include Trust Membership payments, Beacon and TAM. Payments through BACS and PayPal. Bank Account, online banking and card readers.

Future discussions will include 'Using Beacon' and 'Navigating the u3a Website for Financial Advice'.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 2nd March at 1.30am. For further information contact Sue Blackley [sueblackley@hotmail.com](mailto:sueblackley@hotmail.com)

*Sue Blackley*

## u3a IS ALIVE AND WELL IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

### NICHE INTEREST GROUPS

Brian Platts from Southwell u3a spoke to the Notts network about the idea of allowing members from other u3as to join our Interest Groups.

This topic has been discussed in the past and many u3as already have arrangements in place to enable this to happen. It seems particularly pertinent at this time when meetings are being held virtually and, therefore, the issue of travel doesn't arise. After some discussion it was agreed that each u3a should feel free to explore this idea and come to their own decision. This will be discussed further at our April Network meeting but matters can be set in motion sooner by simply deciding that your u3a wishes to invite others to join named Interest Groups, writing an email and sending it to Margot to forward it to the Network.

*Rosie Allen, Chair, Notts Network*

### RADCLIFFE-ON-TRENT u3a

After numerous Covid-19 inspired delays, we are delighted to say we have now aired our next TV programme. The speaker was Laura Parker, who is the Community Archaeologist at Trent and Peak Trust This offers a full range of heritage services including flood defence and high-definition surveys. It is also part of the company that owns The Jorvik Centre in York.

Laura works supervising community projects in The East Midlands including "We Dig The Castle" and founded The Young Archaeologists Club. She is an enthusiastic and enjoyable speaker. The programme was premiered on Notts TV on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30pm and repeated on Thursday 4th February at 2pm. It can now be found on their website and our u3a website. Online: [rot-u3a.org.uk](http://rot-u3a.org.uk) or [nottstv.com](http://nottstv.com).

*Penny Tytler*



### DUKERIES u3a ON ZOOM

We have started 2021 by re-launching our Members' Monthly Meetings on the third Monday of each month with guest speakers. There are many presenters available at the moment as they can't do talks on cruise ships!

On Wednesday Nights we exercise our brains and memories with quizzes, puzzles and Scattergories. The members take turns to prepare questions. One success we had was choosing five people to re-search and ask ten questions about their names.

For example, Michael looked for questions and answers which might include the names or words Mick, Mike, Michaela, Michel, Mica, Mitch etc.

On Fridays and Saturdays we might have "Happy Hours", Theme Nights with fancy dress like Burns Night, Valentines and Mad March. Casino nights are popular and we have even had a Murder Mystery Night.

We share stories and photos so we can learn, laugh and feel we are still connected and living.

*Leslye Henstock, Chair, Dukeries u3a*

## BINGHAM u3a

### WAKE UP AND SMELL THE COFFEE! SURE HITS THE SPOT!

- On the 16th December we joined with Newark u3a and were treated to a virtual Christmas Entertainment presented by Sun Jester. The event was much enjoyed by up to 184 people.
- On the 20th January, the legendary Vince Eager amused us all with virtual tales of Life After the Eurovision Song Contest and other rock 'n' roll greats including Eddie Cochran, Gene Vincent, Lonnie Donegan and Alvin Stardust. Lots of appreciative comments about that one, too.
- On the 17th February, Bill Ruff told us online about A Day in the Life of the English Language, with amazing revelations including the reason why noise makes you seasick, why coffee is linked to monks and monkeys and more.
- We've got our Spring online programme sorted too, with Mike Storr the monologue king and 'Masters of Mirth - The Sequel' in March, Mark Barron on 'Carrara Marble - Michelangelo's Greatest Love' in April and Chartered Engineer Pete Dexter on the Emmett Clock in May. Expect suggestive language, explicit images, full-frontal nudity and wacko inventions.
- At Christmas every online member had an e- card from us and a delightful daily Advent Calendar with beautiful verses and images, followed up with the launch in our January newsletter of our Castaway Compendium, loosely based on Desert Island Discs.
- We're aiming to air our own show on Community Radio station 103 The Eye FM and also to feature in future u3a Radio podcasts
- Our members not online are being looked after, too. A Christmas card and a paper copy of our January newsletter went out by mail to every member who can't get online, which will continue with future issues and we're also keeping in telephone contact with them.

*John Lewis, Chair*

## BEESTON u3a

During the past year we at Beeston u3a have begun several new groups which are probably more successful on Zoom than face to face and will carry on in the same format after the lock down is over. One of the best attended is our Desert Island Discs group which is run Jointly with The Park Nottingham u3a. Maureen Moffatt organises the speakers, drawn from our own membership, and Derek Constable finds and plays the short snippets of music and videos matching the castaways' choices.

I did my selection in February and it was probably one of the most self-indulgent and fun things I have done for a long time, inflicting my choice of music on a group of unsuspecting u3a members! I think anyone who has listened to Desert Island Discs muses on what their choice would be but, when you are actually asked to narrow your thoughts down to just eight songs, it is incredibly difficult. My choices tended to be music which reminded me of happy memories throughout my life ranging from the music my daughters walked down the aisle to on their wedding days, through to the first dance I had with my lovely hubby many years ago at Durham University.

I really do recommend you considering starting your own Desert Island Discs but if you wish to tune into the Park/Beeston's group to see how it runs then just contact me at [chair@beestonu3a.org.uk](mailto:chair@beestonu3a.org.uk). Maureen has also offered to help any other u3a with advice and tips about setting a group up for yourself.

*Margot Gale, Chair*

### **The deadline for articles and photographs for the next issue of Newsbites! is 15th March**

Any plans for 2021—will we all be able to meet again? Are you preparing for u3a Day? Anything else you want to tell other u3as.

Please submit your articles using font Arial 10pt if possible

Articles/photos please to [jane.newsbites@gmail.com](mailto:jane.newsbites@gmail.com)

# NEWS FROM THE REGION AND u3a OFFICE

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

Hello I am Chris Hartny-Mills a newly appointed Public Relations Advisor for the East Midland Region.

It is no secret the u3a membership numbers across the nation have been in decline over the past few years. The advent of C-19 has accelerated this and it is anticipated that membership numbers this year will be down by 20% to 25%. This means we must not only do more to retain existing members, but we must be prepared to recruit new ones. **PR is the fore-runner of recruitment, it's all about creating awareness in our geographical areas, all of which vary from urban to extremely rural. This has bought about the creation of my role of PR Advisor.**

### What's a PR Advisor?

My role is to work in an advisory capacity, working alongside u3as across the region trying to identify areas where we can possibly spread the awareness of the u3a and make a real impact and promote the growth of numbers. There are many untapped opportunities which will widen the web of awareness and every u3a will have different activities that will bring the highest yield.

I have no illusions that some u3as will be further down the track than others, and may feel they have all of the bases covered, maybe these are experiences that other u3as may find very useful?

I am covering all of the u3as across the East Midland Region, which is 117 u3as. For me to be effective as a PR Advisor will be dependent on me developing a two way communications network. I have asked, via a message from Jean Hogg, for all u3as to send me contact details of their PR representative, who I am dubbing **Newshounds**.



A Newshound will receive help and information from me and will also provide me with news of what they are doing to help spread the word. This is beginning to happen already press releases are being circulated to other Newshounds and I am building a rapport with certain u3as who are willing to help, or who are in need of help.

PR obviously comes to the fore when we discuss u3a Day plans, and this will be an area of heavy concentration over the coming months. I also plan to hold some Zoom meetings of six or eight Newshounds where we can exchange ideas and suggestions, I will select a mixture of attendees with different levels of experience to compare notes. I am aiming to be as accessible as I can, I will attend committee meetings, when asked, to explain about my role and see how I can help each and every u3a that needs me.

By working together we will strive to find these opportunities and get to spread the u3a name and express details about the culture of the u3a to as many people that we possibly can. As I said this is a brand new role with a massive remit, it will take a while before it becomes really effective, but I will do my very best to provide a service to every u3a that gets in touch with me.

Because of the anticipated traffic I am using this dedicated email address for PR communications.

[pr.advisor.em@gmail.com](mailto:pr.advisor.em@gmail.com)

## NATIONAL WEBSITE

Have you looked at the national website recently? It is constantly being updated, with new information added. Have a browse, it's amazing what you can find there. Have you looked at the Online Learning Events that are available? Most of them are free and easy to sign up to.

## u3a DAY— WEDNESDAY 2 JUNE 2021

**Is your u3a making plans for u3a day?** We do not know whether lockdown will be over and you can have publicity events with visitors or whether what you do will have to be virtual—you could make plans for either eventuality. The idea is to publicise the u3a movement and its benefits to as many people as possible. u3a Office is planning to contact the national media, but your u3a can do its bit to help by contacting your local press and radio. There is information available on the website to help with planning and publicity material will be available via the office.

## COVID-19



The National Office website is regularly updated to take into account the latest instructions from the Government. The current regulations can be found on the Home page under How to Run Your u3a: Covid and Beyond.

It is possible that, even when we have all had our 'jabs' it will be some time before we can meet again face-to-face, so in the meantime take care and stay safe. Your u3a will still be there when you can return.



## VOLUNTEER WITH THE u3a OFFICE ADVICE LINE

Do you want to help the movement during these unprecedented times, providing information and guidance for members who are running u3as

We are looking for volunteers with a good knowledge of the u3a movement and the work of committees. Ideally we'd like volunteers who have some understanding of help-desks, knowledge-based software or cloud-based phone systems or who have worked in customer support roles previously.

This role is home-based. Training and support meetings will be held virtually with team members and we will provide the software for you to access our telephone system on line.

For an informal discussion [contact Mingma Norman](mailto:mingma.norman@u3a.org.uk), Volunteer Development Officer. [mingma.norman@u3a.org.uk](mailto:mingma.norman@u3a.org.uk)

Nottingham is ready and waiting for when we can safely visit again



Photograph sent in by Anne Archer of Arnold u3a