

Our first anniversary

We are approaching our second Annual General Meeting, so this is a good time to reflect on our first full 'official' year as a U3A. We are one of 988 U3A's throughout the country, some of which are even younger than ours. We are a movement dedicated to learning for pleasure, and I hope your last year has been an enjoyable one, making new friends as well as learning new skills. As you will see on page three of the Annual Report, one member of our Creative Writing Group is celebrating a win at the Mrs Sunderland Festival. What a great achievement. On the whole though, U3A learning is not about certificates and prizes. It is about the rewards of coming together and co-operating.

I know I have enjoyed chairing some of our monthly meetings. Since the AGM last April we have had a wide range of speakers and entertainment. All our monthly meetings are well attended, with the last few needing extra seats bringing in from the room next door. Now we have use of the foyer as well as the hall we have more opportunities to talk to you about all our activities.

I have also enjoyed chairing most of our committee meetings. However I did inform the last committee meeting that for personal reasons I feel unable to continue as chair after the Annual General Meeting. I would like to carry on as a committee member in another capacity, providing you decide to elect me. Don't forget to nominate your choice of names for our committee. We need nominations by **Friday 11th March** and have attached the forms to the end of this newsletter.

We won't stand still over the next year. There are plans for days out, and no doubt new groups will emerge. We thrive on your ideas, so why not come and join our AGM to share them.

Finally, our last monthly meeting said a fond farewell to Kathy and Gareth Bonner. Both were very supportive of our fledgling U3A, which owes a lot to Kathy, one of our founder members. I am sure you will join me in wishing them well in their new life.

Barry Dale,

U3A Chair.



The committee you elected in April 2015



The committee

The committee has met on a regular monthly basis on each first Wednesday. Committee members lead on developing relations with the Yorkshire & The Humber region and have attended a number of discussions. One of the regional meetings led to the committee developing new principles about how we will manage any disputes or disagreements. These will be published shortly.

The Committee also planned the successful special Christmas meeting. We are already looking out for a bigger venue for an even better event in 2016. We held a discussion evening for group leaders and are planning a second one. We produced a set of guidance notes for group leaders, which are available to anyone considering setting up a group. We are starting to set up task groups to work on specific projects, such as the one currently planning days out.

We have added a page to the website giving more details of each of the officers and committee members and the tasks they take on. Most are seeking re-nomination in 2016, but there are potential vacancies.

Groups

The main purpose of a U3A is to encourage self-help learning in small groups. The number of groups available has almost doubled this year. You can see reports from some of them below. Some are termly, whilst others need to maintain a waiting list. However we do try and set up new groups when we find one is full. Our group leaders are a vital part of the organisation and we thank every one of them for the work they put in.

Monthly meetings

Our monthly meetings are now well established and are free of charge to all U3A members. As well as a speaker or entertainment there is time to talk to committee members or new found friends over tea. Non-members can visit a couple of times to find out more. We then ask them to join.

Members

Most of those who signed up during our partial foundation year joined again in 2015 and numbers have been growing steadily ever since. On 1st March we had 321 members. The number at the same point last year was 178, so we are growing all the time. We hope you will all sign up again in 2016. Anyone attending a U3A group must join the U3A. Membership renewal forms will be posted very soon with the AGM agenda.

Communications

We now have a small leaflet available in key places to advertise our U3A. We also plan to hold a big event in September to share our activities and try to bring in new members.

We also try to keep you up to date as members. The quarterly news is now supplemented by month updates, all posted on the website and emailed as a link to most members. There are paper copies available at meetings and copies posted to those without email. Some groups have started to develop their own web pages as part of our site and we will expand this soon.

Finance

Membership growth has meant that our income has increased enabling the committee to vote to keep the membership fees at £15 for the full year, with part year fees available to new members. Our fees cover a capitation levy to U3A Head Quarters who provide insurance cover and a National magazine mailed direct to members. It also covers our local costs, hiring rooms for committee meetings, monthly general meetings and when necessary payment for a speaker.

As more members have access to e-mails we are able to reduce the amount of costs on postage and printing. We have not had any major capital expenditure this year and will carry forward a healthy balance in the bank for the year 2016/2017

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Future plans

We are in need of someone to take minutes at our committee meetings as Lynn Hanks is no longer able to take on this task. We have also started to record the proceedings of our monthly meetings for all members. Those two sets of records don't have to be kept by the same person, so if you think you have suitable skills do volunteer.

The possibility of holidays together is pencilled in as an idea once we establish our planned days out. There is still the possibility of a science group after the talk at our January monthly meeting, and we know you could still make use of some IT learning. No doubt more possibilities will emerge throughout the year.

Theatre Group

We had a very successful first full year and now have 108 names on the Mailing list. Mailings are sent out approximately 6 times a year and the Theatre page on the Holme Valley website is regularly updated. I would encourage members to respond promptly to e-mails in order that dates can be agreed and booked early. We had 15 trips between March 2015 and February 2016 travelling by coach, minibus, train or car. Parties ranged from 2 to 35.

Hiring minibuses from Denby Dale Community Association has made transport much easier and has proved very popular. Cost has averaged between £5 - £10 per person and is based on estimated petrol costs and driving time. Any small amounts of money left once invoices have been paid are used to cover postage, phone calls, booking fees etc. Now the Holme Valley U3A Social Account at HSBC has been set up, payment by bank transfer is much easier for all concerned, though some still prefer to pay by cheque or cash.

Productions attended have included

- Mar 2015 - **'Top Hat'** Sheffield Lyceum, 5 travelled by shared car
- Mar 2015 - **'Blood Brothers'**, Palace Theatre, Manchester, 3 travelled by train
- Mar 2015 - **'Calamity Jane'**, Palace Theatre, Manchester, 2 travelled by car
- May 2015 - **'Dirty Rotten Scoundrels'**, Manchester Opera House. 35 travelled by coach
- Sept 2015 - **'Much Ado About Nothing'**, Richmond Georgian Theatre, 12 by shared cars
- Sept 2015 - **'Confusions'** by Alan Ayckbourn, Scarborough Theatre, 14 travelled by train
- Oct 2015 - **'A Winter's Tale'** LBT, 7 travelled by shared cars
- Oct 2015 - **'Hamlet'** live streaming Penistone Paramount, 4 travelled in shared cars
- Oct 2015 - **'Mack and Mabel'**, Manchester Opera House, 15 travelled by minibus
- Nov 2015 - **'Beryl'**, LBT, 3 travelled by shared car
- Nov 2015 - **'Kiss Me Kate'**, The Lowry, Salford, Matinee 14 travelled by minibus
- Nov 2015 **'Of Mice and Men'** live streaming from Broadway, New York at Penistone Paramount 4 shared cars
- Nov 2015 - **'The Girls'**, Leeds Grand, 14 travelled by minibus
- Jan 2016 - **'Showboat'**, Sheffield Crucible, 14 travelled by minibus
- Feb 2016 - **King Charles 111**, with Robert Powell, Sheffield Lyceum, 16 travelled by minibus/car
- Feb 2016 - **The Pitmen Painters**, Oldham, 12 travelled by minibus
- Feb 2016 - **Matthew Bourne's Sleeping Beauty**, Bradford Alhambra, 12 travelled by minibus

We have tried to offer a wide range of productions including drama, comedy, ballet and live cinema screenings, but have tended to attend more musicals. Members are asked to suggest productions which they think may be of general interest.

We have visited theatres in Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield, Oldham, Salford, Huddersfield, Penistone, Scarborough and Richmond.

Pat Whalley, Theatre Group Leader

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Creative Writing

This group began in February 2015, so we are now celebrating the fact that we have been running for one year. We have eleven members of varying backgrounds who have a common interest in varied styles of writing. We have a double celebration this month, because one of our members, Anne Broadbent entered the Mrs Sunderland Festival which covers Music, Speech and Drama and she won first prize. Well done Anne.

Anne entered three poems – which were all graded very highly – but the winner was one entitled One A.M. written in the form of as Villanelle. She was presented with a cup at the Huddersfield Town Hall by the published poet Angela Topping who acted as the judge in the competition.

The creative writing group meets weekly at the Holmfirth Methodist chapel every Thursday afternoon 1p.m. to 3p.m. Come and join us, we are a friendly group and non-competitive.

Dorothy Foster, Creative Writing Group Leader



Maths is Fun

We meet weekly at Holmfirth Methodist church and as our title says we just have fun. Believe it or not Maths can be fun. You don't need to be a whizz at maths to join us. There is no pressure on you, we all help one another and have a laugh into the bargain.

IT'S NOT LIKE SCHOOL.

Current attendees have said they've learnt all sorts of different things from using Napier's Bones to Sudoku. Give us a try. Anyone can join at any time

Fiona Platt, Leader, Maths is Fun

French

What one misses often when learning a language is to use it in social situations. Also to keep it up without forgetting. So the group meets once a month to chat and have coffee/tea. It is all very informal, great fun and the level varies from quite competent to a little less so, but we all manage.

Latin

The group meets twice monthly and we do not have a leader as such but are all learning together and help each other as some have done Latin before and some are just beginning. It often involves a lot of hilarity.

Shirley Boardman, on behalf of French and Latin groups

Monday morning discussions

We chose Monday as the day for our discussion group so we could ponder over some of those weekend headlines and learn more about the world we live in. We have had plenty of choice of topics this year, tackling immigration, prisons, the NHS and a very timely debate on Europe. In between we have some lighter topics, with members bringing along a topic to put in the hat. 'Should men wash the porridge pot' must be our most unusual choice. We have grown during the year, with around twelve friendly members at the moment. We meet every other Monday and would welcome a few more members.

Anne Baldwin, leader, discussion group.

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<https://www.facebook.com/gentlemovementU3A/>

Gentle Movement

Gentle Movement has been a great joy this year. We have had live music every week from Robin Bowles and as the group has got to know each other we have begun to feel more secure doing improvised movement with music. There have been many magical moments. All appreciate the session and the way it lifts one's spirits.

Anne Bettys, leader, Gentle Movement

Ukulele

The Ukulele Group will be 1 year old first week in March.

We have 21 members on the books of which half the number have been with us from the start.

We have progressed from raw beginners to improvers and now have a repertoire of some 10 songs.

We meet every fortnight and are getting good attendances.

Due to lack of space however, I have now had to close the membership, and as we are only getting very few enquiries I am not looking to expand or seek new venues at this stage.

I am really pleased with the way the members have embraced the instrument and we have developed into a enthusiastic and sociable group.

John Senior, Ukulele Tutor.

Crown Green Bowling

A new crown green bowling group was started in March of last year using the facilities of Meltham Sports Club. The group met on a Monday and Thursday at 2:00 and on our most popular days would have approximately 12 bowlers playing each other in teams of two or individually.

We had brilliant support from Mick and the Meltham bowlers, lending and in one instance giving bowls to our members when we first started. Meltham has two bowling greens and we can therefore always get a game even if there are competitions taking place on the other green. The charge for this was £1 a session and during the months of March to September we collected nearly £300 for Meltham's funds.

The bowling closed in October but Mick introduced us to Meltham's indoor facilities, which consisted of table tennis and curling. He also informed us that the club was in the process of purchasing a couple of indoor short mat bowling sets which duly arrived in the New Year.

The charge for using these facilities is £1 per person per hour, with a half time break for coffee, biscuits and gossip for 50p.

New members to both the outside and inside groups are welcomed, just turn up on the day.

Jackie Green, Group Leader



Boules 2015

We started to play Boules in the spring of 2015 at the Honley Village Hall pitch. The Honley Village Community Trust trustees very kindly offered this facility free of charge. The match days were Wednesday's weekly starting at 1:30 and we had a core group of 8 players with some added guests on an irregular basis.

Playing for fun is not an option as we have amongst our members some very competitive people who like to win at all costs.

Unfortunately we had to stop playing in October due to the cold, wet weather but are looking to start again fairly soon.

New members are always welcome and I must emphasise that boules can be obtained on loan free of charge from the Village Hall. Our regular members also have spares that we can offer. It was decided that we should make a donation to the Trust for allowing us to use their facilities, so sent a cheque via the U3A, as a thank you.

It has been decided that a fairer option would be to charge 50p per week to spread the cost over the year and again pass a donation on at Christmas time.

Tom Green, Group Leader

De-stressing your life

In the last eighteen months on average 20 members have come together fortnightly to share friendships, experiences and to learn more about self-awareness and self-empowerment in difficult times. Group meetings have been supplemented by regular sessions on a variety of feel-good related themes and professional advice has also been on hand. 'We are truly a self-help **feel-good** factor learning co-operative'. For more details ring Maria on 852094.

Maria Lawrence, Caroline Walker, co-leaders

Holme Valley U3A Folk dance group

Our group started off small, but we have learnt quite a few of the figures of English (and American) folk dances, having lots of fun along the way. Recently numbers have doubled which allows more dance variety. We have room for more dancers, but a *gosh* is essential and 2 left feet is no problem.

Elisabeth (Nibs) Watson, leader

Family history

Many of our members have now joined our six-week courses at Meltham Root Cellar and explored their own roots with expert support. There is room for a new course in the future and possibly a get-together to share notes on progress for those who have completed the course. Please register your interest with Joan.

Joan Firth, coordinator

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Walking groups

Not surprisingly given our location, we have expanded the number and range of our walking groups this year. We now have a monthly ambling group with short and relatively straightforward walks. Our 'easy' walking group caters for those who can manage a slightly faster pace, with two other groups tackling distances up to ten miles. The groups are very popular and need to operate waiting lists from time to time. If you are unsure which group might be right for you do email hvu3a@gmail.com, letting us know what you think you are capable of. We can then arrange for you to chat to one of the team of walking group leaders.

Peter Schofield leads the **Tuesday walking group**

Launched in October 2015, the Tuesday walking group meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. Originally established to meet the needs of U3A members who were unable to be catered for by the long running Thursday group, the Tuesday group now has an identity of its own to the extent that some members now participate in the activities of both groups.

We undertake both circular and linear (using public transport) walks of between six and eight miles with occasional forays over slightly longer distances. During the winter period, our walks have been fairly local so for example, we completed the Holme Valley Circular Walk in sections. However in the warmer months we intend to spread our wings a little further and make use of the opportunities given to us by the beautiful national park situated on our doorstep.

Our genial and sociable group still has room to accommodate more members so if you are interested in getting out into the Great Outdoors, please contact us on u3awalkinghv2@virginmedia.com.

The Digital Photography Group

We meet on the 4th Thursday of each month, at the Holmfirth Methodist Church from 1:30 to 3:30 pm. All members of the HV U3A are welcomed. We are a self-help group (from beginners to the more experienced) interested in taking digital photographs who meet to learn from each other, share our photos and ideas. Each month we share tips and advice on photographic and editing techniques and show and discuss our photos on a theme. These themes have included "Water", "Spring", "Autumn", "the Tour de Yorkshire" etc. Outdoor photo sessions/challenges are planned for when the weather gets warmer.

We also run separate training sessions. Our "beginners' course" is very popular and is already on its third run. For more information see our web pages at

<http://u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=740&page=53632>

<http://u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=740&page=53699>

<http://u3asites.org.uk/code/u3asite.php?site=740&page=53700>

Carl Heywood - DPG Group Leader

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Noticeboard

Our monthly meetings are open to all members.

At Holmfirth Methodist rooms (church entrance), 10.00am – noon.

Refreshments available at the start of the meeting

Friday 8th April

Our Annual General Meeting with entertainment from our Ukulele group.

To nominate officers and committee members (including current post-holders) please complete the forms attached to this newsletter and either bring them to the March meeting or return them to Barry Dale by March 11th. AGM agendas and your annual renewal forms will be posted to you shortly after that meeting.

Days out

Our first day out is planned for **Tuesday 14th June**. The trip will involve an early start of around 0800 from Holmfirth and our first destination will be the Worth Valley, where we shall enjoy a return train journey on the steam-hauled heritage railway. We then head for Skipton where there will be a couple of hours or so free time to explore the market town at your own speed and leisure. This is followed by a two hour trip on the famous Leeds and Liverpool Canal, which this year is celebrating its two hundredth anniversary of opening! A cream tea of scone and drinks will be served on board as we journey along the canal.

Any member can join our days out, but numbers will be limited. Further details and a booking form will be sent out shortly.

Need to know more about the U3A?

Do you want to join a group or set up a new one?

- **07548992144**

Is the best number to call about membership and general enquiries. It will usually be answered by Jenny.

- **523717 or 07739460861**

Will reach Shirley, who keeps details of all groups and group leaders.