

## Leicester Newsletter

November 2020

[u3asites.org.uk/leicester](http://u3asites.org.uk/leicester)



*'Water' photo by Matt Matthew*

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## **Membership Information**

The membership stands at 423. There have been no changes notified since last month. Because of the current situation we are not encouraging new members but are happy to provide information about our activities when we are able to resume them.

Most, if not all, physical meetings of Leicester u3a are currently suspended due to the changing Coronavirus situation, but many groups are meeting online. *Margaret Potter (Membership Secretary & Temporary Editor)*

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



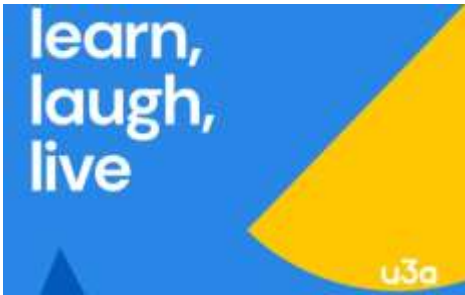
Another month passes and with the clocks having changed, we are now moving from autumn to winter. The Covid crisis, which has put most u3a activities on hold, has been with us for eight months and shows no sign of abating. Increasing attention is being paid to the effect that prolonged isolation and separation from friends and family is having on mental welfare. One of the benefits of the u3a is the way that, in normal circumstances, it provides opportunities for social contact. This has not been the case for much of this year and, as you know, the Committee has been encouraging us to go out of our way to keep in contact with other u3a members and, in particular, those who might be feeling cut off and lonely as a result of the lockdown restrictions.

Another sign of approaching winter will shortly be coming our way in the form of the annual letter about renewing our u3a memberships. I shall certainly be renewing my membership and I would encourage everyone else to do so too. Although the subscription is fairly modest we can all feel, with some justification, that we have not had good value for it in 2020. This is a matter to which the Committee has given some thought. Unfortunately, there is not a lot that can be done about it in the short term. The subscription level is set by the membership as a whole at the AGM and neither the Committee nor anyone else has the power to modify it. Because of the continuing Covid restrictions we cannot convene a special general meeting before the subscriptions are due. What this means is that the next opportunity to deal with this issue will be at the AGM in the spring. It is likely that there will be a recommendation to the AGM that, when it sets the new subscription level, special consideration should be given to those who have maintained their membership throughout the crisis.

So there is not much more to say other than keep in touch and renew your membership. Let us hope that by next month the prospect will have improved.

Tony Davison (*Chair Leicester u3a*)

## NEWS FROM THE THIRD AGE TRUST



**NEW BRAND & LOGO!** Did you notice the new logo at the top of page 1? The new brand launched in September. This updated look was chosen after a wide consultation with members. See more about the new brand on [our website](#).

The Third Age Trust is working on a project on the **Battle of Britain** and wants to hear about your experiences and memories. Please [email us](#) your stories.

### **Reports on The National AGM held virtually on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September.**

#### **1. General report by Neil Taylor (Groups Coordinator)**

On Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September, the Third Age Trust National AGM took place, online this year, with 421 u3as taking part.

Sam Mauger, the Chief Executive, and Ian McCannah, the Chair, were impressive, and the meeting had lots of points for the future worth noting. In his Chair's Report Ian McCannah highlighted the strong progress made in implementing the 2019 Development Plan. He also drew attention to the efforts of the staff at the Head Office, affected by flooding and then remote working through the lockdown. They total 16: for the 22<sup>nd</sup> largest charity in the UK.

Work on projects such as the *Diary; u3a Eye; the National Creative Writing Competition* was commended, with *u3a Radio* being launched immediately after the AGM on the national website. *National Subject Advisers* were also mentioned for their work transferring Talks and Summer School Activities online through the Coronavirus restrictions; as were the *Learning Committee*, for creating the Learning Hub and its materials. *Shared Learning Projects*, short term Research Projects in Museums, Art Galleries and Universities, were highlighted as being at the heart of u3a's mission. 500 u3as participated in the *High Street Project* and on the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2022 results of this will be announced and published. The *International u3a* is huge and continues to grow. The 350 *Trust Volunteers* were also thanked for all their hard work.

*Third Age Matters magazine and the National Newsletter* were congratulated as continuing to be both informative and entertaining. *Third Age Matters* is one of the largest circulation magazines in the country, and

its new editor is already making changes to improve it. Links to it on the national website will soon be in place.

*Beacon Management System* is now used by 440 u3as. An Update Project for Beacon is to be implemented in March 2021.

*Third Age Trust Trading Ltd* has now developed links with Parliament Hill to provide discounts with supermarkets and retailers, to be launched 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

*Trust u3a* would provide information about the u3a virtually until local restrictions are lifted, and future demand for online services for those who can't attend physically was being looked into. Face to Face Meetings and Social Interaction though will always be at the heart of u3a.

The Trust has developed new branding for the movement through the u3a Development Committee. It is advising on, and planning for, re-launching of the u3a after Coronavirus.

Finally, we are extremely fortunate to have a Chief Executive Officer of Sam Mauger's stature and calibre. Working together we will overcome the present difficulties and thank you. Stay safe and we are already looking forward to the next AGM when Coronavirus will hopefully be a thing of the past.

All in all, a fascinating and successful AGM, with many initiatives to hopefully follow up on when Coronavirus is a thing of the past.

## **2. Finance Report by Bob Holness (Treasurer)**

Much thought had been given to the way the meeting should be conducted as a remote meeting. Overall, it was OK, but comments and questions from the floor had to be submitted privately and the company secretary read a summarised version. Proposers and seconders were able to address the meeting. As the meeting had over 700 voting attendees this seemed necessary. The meeting was governed by the Companies Acts - with special dispensations for the pandemic.

The motions affecting finance were three:-

A motion from the Board to increase the payment from u3as (former capitation fee) from £3.50 to £4:00 in 2022

An amendment from u3as to defer this to 2023

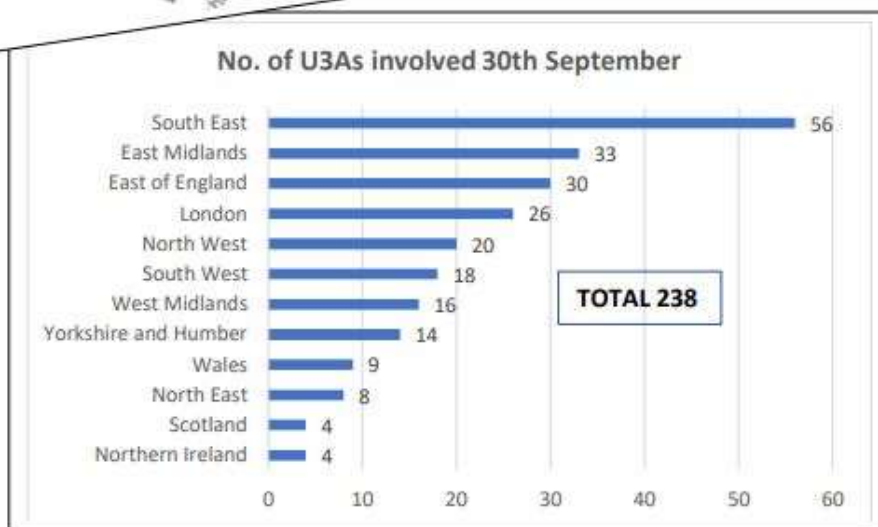
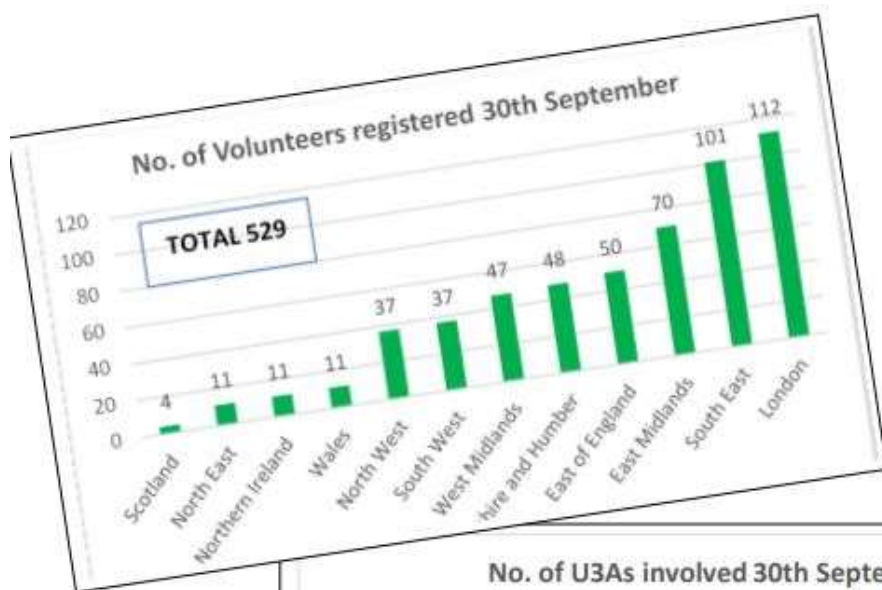
A motion from u3as to make the increase up to £4:50

The amendment was not accepted: 261 for, 474 against, 11 abstaining  
 The Board motion was passed: 508 for, 221 against, 22 abstaining.  
 So the TAT fee in 2022 will be £4:00

### u3a High Street Project

The project closed for uploading of results on 30<sup>th</sup> September. Each of the volunteers should have received a Project News No. 1, an extract from which is printed below. ‘The project has undoubtedly caught the imagination of u3as across the UK. The survey closed on 30 September, so only part of the data has been uploaded and analysed. We have included some graphics to give you a flavour of the material which has been collected but please be aware that this is only a sample.’

As you will see from the graphs, the East Midlands figures highly in the statistics. Well done all who took part. *(Editor)*



## Exciting News: u3a Radio Podcast

The next episode will be broadcast on **Tuesday 17 November** at 11am. Subscribe to our [YouTube channel](#) and click the bell to get an alert when the episode is up.

This second broadcast will look at members' life stories as well as stories from members and groups from across the movement. If you haven't already, listen to the first episode [here](#).

## Third Age Trust Winter Learning Programme

Keep your eyes open for updates of what's available in the Leicester u3a weekly newssheet.

### NEWS FROM THE REGIONAL TRUSTEE – Jean Hogg.

First of all, I do want to thank all of the Committee members and group convenors who have been working so hard for the last few months to keep as many u3a activities going as possible. I have heard from many of you, with both successes and challenges, and it is really appreciated. Some groups are finding very innovative ways of meeting, and I particularly like this account of a wine group meeting at Sutton Bridge.



*In order to maintain the social interaction yet keeping group size under six, the membership, currently eight would be split into two groups and meet at each of two members' houses, preferably in the garden, weather permitting, but if not inside, observing social distancing and other requirements. In order to maintain overall linkage a Zoom link would be established to enable a cross-group discussion of the wines provided.*

This apparently worked very effectively and will be repeated. Of course, part of our region is now in Tier 2 restrictions which are making things even more challenging. It may not be perfect but meeting virtually is certainly much better than nothing and I am pleased that many u3as are continuing to encourage virtual meetings for groups and for their main monthly meeting.

## **Going Forward Together 28th October 10.30 – 12.30**

This event had an inspiring group of speakers encouraging local u3as to set up digital meetings so the organisation survives through the pandemic. Jean was asked if it could be recorded and was hoping that this could be done and made available to those of you unable to join.

The planned **East Midlands Regional Conference 2020 - 'Making a Difference'** has been rearranged for **Wednesday 5th May 2021** at the East Midlands Conference Centre in Eastwood, Nottingham. To view this programme follow this link: [programme](#).

## **NEWS FROM THE NETWORK**

At the meeting of **Leicestershire & Rutland u3a Network Group** on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019 a formal constitution was adopted and a committee appointed. If you would like a copy of the notes from the meeting please contact the Secretary or Newsletter Editor. The next network meeting will be held on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November where the constitution will be amended. A member of our committee normally attends on your behalf.

## **UPDATE FROM THE GROUPS COORDINATOR**

By the time you read this, Natural History will have met, on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, at Shady Lane Arboretum, there to enjoy a special treat - evidence of the largest organism in Evington - or possibly the whole of Leicestershire - in their Fungal Forage.

Also, as well as keeping in touch with each other our biggest group - last count 52 members - the Ramblers - are preparing to re-start, at a suitable time in the future. Jan Hall, its Convenor, has sent out emails to the group's members over the months. The Ramblers Association, who have worked with the National u3a to advise on walking activities, has produced a similar risk assessment to ours that it asks its members to complete. Our ramblers will have a try out walk under the 'maximum six' rules and hope, restrictions willing, to develop over the coming months.





Just to emphasise, every member clearly decides what s/he wants to do in the personal risk assessment (Have you any health issues? Has your family or your households any health issues? Do you think the activity is safe, and within the present guidelines?), and informs the Convenor. The Group Convenor then fills out the relevant risk assessment: Outdoor, Indoor, Venue and sends it to me for the records. You need do this only once – before re-starting your group’s activity.

Of course, to coin a phrase, “It’ll end in Tiers” (!) so we’ll all scream silently to ourselves and wait a while longer - I received a very funny message recently which showed a music teacher who had made up a song to reflect her feelings through Coronavirus. It included a short, jaunty ukulele intro followed by a long, heartfelt scream! Then short jaunty ukulele finish...!!

I hope we’ll have something better to look forward to in January’s Newsletter! Take Care.

*(Neil Taylor - Groups Coordinator)*

## **MEET THE CONVENOR**

This month’s Convenor is Henry Paulinski, Convenor of the Bridge 2, Current Affairs 2 and Discussion 2.

*Q: Are you originally from Leicester?* No, I was born in Sheffield and raised in London. My parents were Polish and attached to the Polish Airforce during the war, hence I was born here in Britain.

*Q: What brought you to Leicester u3a?* In 1976/77 I worked for a company making instruments in Saffron Lane. During that time I enjoyed the work and the people so much that I wanted to come back if I ever got a chance. After 18 months I moved back to London but in 1990 I joined a friend who started up a business in Beaumont Leys making radio pagers and I’ve been here ever since.

*Q: What did you do before you retired?*

I stayed with the company after that when they diversified into multiple electronic items including an electronic version of the famous ‘Lazy Susan’ and juke boxes.

*Q: What made you join Leicester u3a, & when?* I was recommended by a bridge playing friend, and joined in July 2016. I wanted to join an organisation where the most important thing was who you were and not what you did.

*Q: What groups did you join to start with?* I joined bridge and took over as convenor when the then convenor – Hugh Graham – stood down. It started off as Bridge Beginners and developed into Bridge Improvers and is now called Bridge 2. Since then I have joined, and become the convenor for, Current Affairs 2 and Discussion Group 2, both of which show my life-long interest in politics.

*Q: What's your TV guilty pleasure?* Watching football, specifically supporting Tottenham Hotspur.

*Q: What was the last book you read?* I have a terrible habit of reading dozens of book at a time on my Kindle. The last one I finished was The Lubetkin Legacy by Marina Lewycka

*My grateful thanks to Henry for his time. (Editor)*

## **REPORTS FROM THE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS**

### **Creative Writing – Further Competition Entries**

#### **Joint 1<sup>st</sup> Prize Poetry: Jim McCullum 'An Encounter on Christmas Eve'.**

Christmas Eve, and across the park came  
Three girls, about 15, chatting  
And laughing softly, dressed  
As if about to visit Granny.

Jennifer, a teacher all her days,  
Said: “They won’t know it,  
But these are the days of days,  
The fulcrum of your life,  
That you look back on so fondly.”

We walked on, as did they, into lives as yet unwritten.

## **2nd Prize Prose: Janet Malloy 'Comeuppance',**

It didn't do to enquire too closely into how Father had acquired the violin. According to him he'd single-handedly liberated the city of Cologne and had also liberated the violin. Mother wasn't particularly keen to see the return of her husband. She'd quite enjoyed the war, and away from his bullying she'd become a key figure in the local Red Cross. Now she reverted to the cowed wife who did as she was told, or else...

Henry didn't remember much about his father but began to feel the pressure when he was presented with the violin and told to learn to play it. He wanted to be a footballer, or maybe a fireman, or perhaps a magician, but certainly not a musician. But protests were in vain. A teacher was found and Henry and his mother endured the tortured squeals produced by a learner on that instrument. Father didn't suffer as he normally spent his free time in the pub, so he was unaware of the lack of progress or interest of his son.

The local council was keen to restore the community spirit that had dwindled after the war ended. They announced that there would be a concert on Friday evening in two weeks' time. There would be a vote to determine who would receive a £5 prize for the best act. Father confidently entered Henry and was already deciding how he would spend the £5.

Henry and his mother were appalled, but nothing could dissuade Father. The best Henry could manage was a shaky version of 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' and you needed to know the tune to even recognize that. What was to be done? Frantic practice produced no improvement in performance but a lot of tears and tantrums – some of them from Henry's despairing teacher. She knew where the blame would descend if Henry failed to come up to scratch. She'd had experience of dissatisfied parents before and knew that informing them that their child had no musical talent or interest didn't help, even when it was obviously true.

Desperate measures were needed. Mother had pressed Henry's only pair of decent shorts in readiness and his teacher gave him extra lessons, free of charge. Henry really did try, but the more he tried, the worse he became. Time was getting short. Then fate took a hand and sent a chickenpox epidemic to the area. In desperation Mother painted a few red spots on Henry's face and told his father that he couldn't possibly play in the concert. Father didn't believe her; the spots didn't look right and he discovered that they could be removed with the corner of a damp handkerchief. In trying to escape the blow launched in her direction by her

irate husband, Mother sat down heavily on the violin...

The concert was cancelled due to the chickenpox epidemic.

### **The Leicester Local Plan**

The Leicester Local Plan, covering the years 2020 – 2036, looks at city's needs for housing, shopping, the economy and transport in the future. The City Council hopes a wide range of people will look at the 248 page Draft Local Plan, make comments and suggest improvements. The Public Consultation period will close on December 7<sup>th</sup>. You can find the Plan here [https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/sec/draft-local-plan/supporting\\_documents/Draft%20Local%20Plan.pdf](https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/sec/draft-local-plan/supporting_documents/Draft%20Local%20Plan.pdf) There are details about the Consultation here

<https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/sec/draft-local-plan/>

The Architecture and Design Group has a Zoom meeting with a speaker to discuss the Plan on Wednesday November 11<sup>th</sup> at 1.00pm. If you would like to join the meeting please e-mail me

[architecture3@leicesteru3a.org.uk](mailto:architecture3@leicesteru3a.org.uk)

*(Veronica Matthew Convenor Architecture & Design Group)*

### **Three Group reports from the Convenor – Henry Paulinski**

Bridge 2 continues on Zoom with bi-monthly sessions to discuss the finer points of the game. We link up with Bridge 1 to play regularly every week via Bridge Base, using *WhatsApp* for player discussions.

Discussion Group 2 meets monthly via Zoom, with two members joining in via a landline and a mobile. Recent topics have included *Fantasy Dinner Party Guests* and *Should There be a Statute of Limitations on War Crimes?*

Current Affairs 2 still draws in 70 per cent of its members for its monthly meetings via Zoom. Again, some members join in on their telephone handsets on speakerphone.

## **Royal visit**

The day is in March 1944: I am 12 years old and am sitting in a maths lesson in my Leeds boys' grammar school. Suddenly a message comes through from the headmaster: we are ordered to leave our classroom immediately in orderly fashion and make our way out of the school front door; and then make our way outside on to the pavement which borders the Leeds Ring Road. It seems that no less a person than the King himself is expected to pass by in a motor car., and we are asked to stand in single file and clap as he does so.

It is wartime, and consequently there is very little traffic. Suddenly there is distant cheering, and round the corner comes a vehicle - but not the one we are waiting for. It is a Hargreaves coal delivery lorry, and it gets a reception the grimy driver and his grimy workmate cannot possibly have anticipated. Six hundred young people bellowing with laughter, waving, and cheering, all in the middle of his mundane coal round...how weird was that? A few minutes later and the real thing heaves into view, a stately Rolls Royce preceded by a couple of military motor-cycles. Its contents are King and Queen and elder daughter. Little do they know that their reception compares unfavourably in intensity with him who had preceded them.

*Mike Westmoreland (member of the Creative Writing group)*

## **The Disenchanted Garden**

Impressed by Steph's pond article, I asked her advice on how to attract frogs to my new pond. Then two frogs and a newt appeared. A photograph to Steph resulted in an invitation to write about my garden. Serious gardeners look away now.

Ambition outstrips my knowledge and skills. The weeding and pruning are done by Jez, in two summer hours a week. He reluctantly squeezes in my impulse-purchased plants. The garden is never dug, so worms aplenty.

The imperative - attract bees, butterflies and wildlife. Lavender in scruffy hedges and clumps. Clematis, roses, honeysuckle, and hops strangle one another. Hollyhocks don't thrive, except the self-sown, which lift and split concrete slabs! Lupins, camellias, bamboo, poppies, peonies, cotoneaster, aquilegia, and others, which I can't identify, survive in spite of neglect. A "bonsai" rhododendron embarrasses. A fallen ash trunk and logs foster fungi and wood lice. The "jungle" affords shelter and nesting for birds – overgrown, over-planted, rampant weeds and dotted with prolific tiny

horse chestnut and ash tree saplings. The house pergola has a blackbird's nest in the rampant roses. Feeders attract common birds, occasional raids by voracious starlings and scurrying long-tailed mice. Last year a "mock" cherry tree provided food for three days for a flock of twenty fieldfare.

At the bottom of the garden wooden frames support spreading roses and struggling clematis and honeysuckle. This gives gloomy undergrowth with autumnal fungi. Foxgloves and delphiniums have been planted, then overwhelmed by bindweed. Suggestions, please, for ground plants for this shady area and substitutes for nettles where butterflies can lay their eggs.

Water Irises didn't flower, oxygenators kept the 1.5 metre x 90cm pond clear. Only a glimpse of a dragonfly. Another old dry pond liner, possibly punctured by a heron, will be repaired once the conkers are removed. A water butt will be installed to top it up. There's no plant watering, no insect sprays and only occasional root killer are used. Darwinian survival hasn't self-eliminated black spot. The lawn is not cut short, often left untouched for weeks, to help insects survive and buttercups, daisies and other wild flowers grow. Few dandelions have appeared this year. A small area, a bit bigger than the pond, is deliberately left as a wild garden, as opposed to the neglected areas, where tall daisy-like flowers flourish and wild seeds are sprinkled to take their chance.

Snowdrops, daffodils and a dozen hellebores were early. There should have been twenty new hellebores, but whilst the plugs were nurtured, they may have struggled in the early drought. The attempt to grow sweet peas from seed in trays indoors produced straggly weaklings despite nipping out the top. An everlasting sweet pea reappeared to restore faith.

A coffee table on which I sat and shattered the glass top is, like a discarded stool, stepladder and crashed airplane propeller, a frame for plants - hopefully.

AA Milne wrote: "Weeds are flowers once you get to know them." My ignorance lets them flourish.

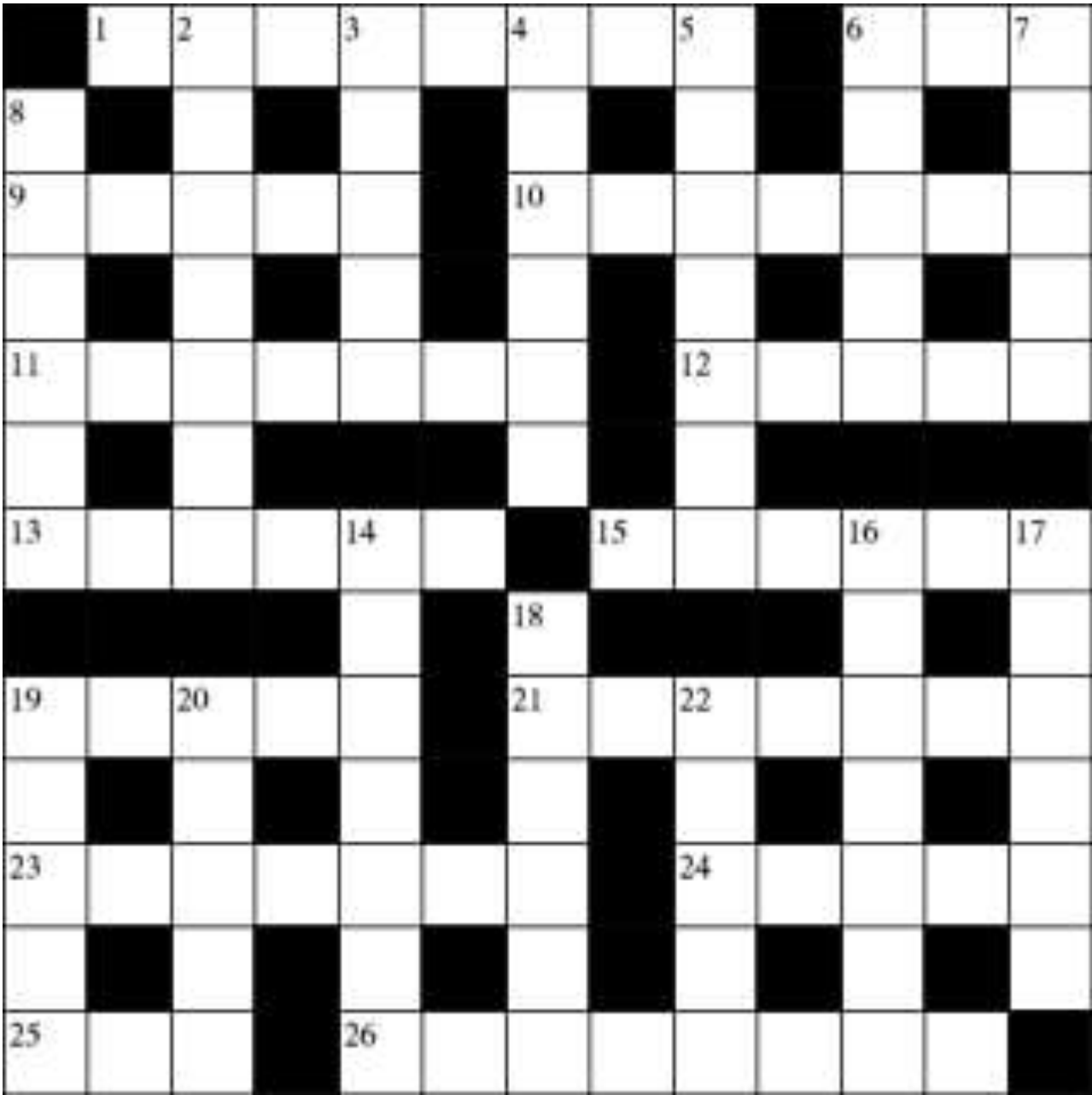
*Tony Locke (Member)*



*Photos of the garden*

# PUZZLE CORNER

Cryptic Crossword (created by Cryptic Crossword 2 Group)





## CLUES

### ACROSS

- 1 Bright light comes from star lustre (8)
- 6 Pay at the door for this fish (3)
- 9 Variety of tapas but from a different country (5)
- 10 Abuse returning alien after instrument (7)
- 11 Catered badly and responded (7)
- 12 Meal doesn't start to satisfy this man (5)
- 13 A French star spins a planet (6)
- 15 Flag officer (6)
- 19 A role is separate (5)
- 21 Indicted for a second-hand carbon copy (7)
- 23 Son murdered expert (7)
- 24 Bald-headed American is a high flyer (5)
- 25 Letter seen on course (3)
- 26 Used to blow up many on diet (8)

### DOWN

- 2 Parvenu puts art in order (7)
- 3 Begin street painting (5)
- 4 Attack and vie wildly (6)
- 5 Feeling earth movement (7)
- 6 Measurement with links (5)
- 7 Gloomy doctor encloses bird losing height (5)
- 8 Good fellows have tantrums rising (6)
- 14 Bothered by conductor and daughter (7)
- 16 Night is changing perception (7)
- 17 Is Ned odd? Agreed! (6)
- 18 Good forest plot (6)
- 19 Girl backed benefit (5)
- 20 A thumbs-up to be similar (5)
- 22 Force fed with ecstasy - it's for the best (5)

# Crossword Solution

	<sup>1</sup> S	<sup>2</sup> U	N	<sup>3</sup> S	H	<sup>4</sup> I	N	<sup>5</sup> E		<sup>6</sup> C	O	<sup>7</sup> D
<sup>8</sup> S		P		T		N		M		H		R
<sup>9</sup> P	A	S	T	A		<sup>10</sup> V	I	O	L	A	T	E
O		T		R		A		T		I		A
<sup>11</sup> R	E	A	C	T	E	D		<sup>12</sup> I	N	N	E	R
T		R				E		O				
<sup>13</sup> S	A	T	U	<sup>14</sup> R	N		<sup>15</sup> E	N	S	<sup>16</sup> I	G	<sup>17</sup> N
				A		<sup>18</sup> G				N		O
<sup>19</sup> A	P	<sup>20</sup> A	R	T		<sup>21</sup> A	C	<sup>22</sup> C	U	S	E	D
S		L		T		R		R		I		D
<sup>23</sup> S	K	I	L	L	E	D		<sup>24</sup> E	A	G	L	E
E		K		E		E		A		H		D
<sup>25</sup> T	E	E		<sup>26</sup> D	Y	N	A	M	I	T	E	

## About the Newsletter

### *A Plea from your temporary Editor*

The position of Editor is currently **STILL** vacant. Although we will try and continue to produce an edition each month whilst we look for a new editor, if no one comes forward the newsletter in its present form may cease to exist. **CAN YOU HELP?** If you think you can offer to help in any capacity please ring me to discuss this. My contact details are in your contact list.

*(Margaret Potter – Temporary Editor)*

### *Delivery*

The Newsletter is currently only being delivered to members by email as a pdf file with one page per side.

### *Contributions*

**The deadline for items to be included in the January Newsletter is Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> December 2020.** Contributions (from convenors and members) should be sent to the editor at: [newsletter@leicesteru3a.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@leicesteru3a.org.uk)

If you want to submit your entry as hard copy, please contact the Editor, or the Membership Secretary for the postal address.

We are always pleased to receive **brief** reports from groups about their recent activities and extend our thanks to all the authors who have done so. Please keep them coming. The occasional picture would be welcome as well. Please keep all articles to a maximum of about 350 words. If you have a story or a report that is considerably longer than that, we can edit it into 2 (or more if it's very long!) shorter articles to be published in subsequent Newsletters.

When the current restrictions are lifted LEICESTER u3a will resume its meetings on the second Tuesday of each month (except August and December) at Christchurch, Clarendon Park Road, LE2 3AH, and many special interest groups will then continue to meet regularly in members' homes and elsewhere.



**And Finally – As this is the last newsletter until the new year, we wish you all as Merry a Christmas and the best New Year you can manage. You are not alone. We are here to help. AND Keep those articles and photos coming please.**