

Learn, Laugh, Live



## Newsletter February 2023

Dear U3A Members,

Welcome to February and snowdrops! Although we have cold days still to come, there are definite signs of spring and plenty to look forward to, starting with the opportunities in this newsletter...

In this issue you will find:

1. News and information for members
  - Membership renewal
  - Call for new committee members
2. Speakers at our monthly meetings
3. Outings
4. Foodies
5. News from the Groups
  - Focus on the wordsmith groups: Creative Writing, Philosophy, Poetry Appreciation, Discussion and Reading Groups.
6. And, finally ....

### 1. News and Information for Members

#### Membership Renewals 2023/2024

U3A Membership runs from April 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup> of the following year.

Members with emails. You should have received your renewal notice on 28th January. If you have not received this, please check your spam. If you require another copy, please contact Lynn.

Once you have renewed, you will receive a confirmation invoice with a pdf copy of your Membership card.

Members without email. You will have collected or received your renewal notice in the post or with the February newsletter. Once you have renewed, you will receive a Membership card either by post, hand delivered or included in your Newsletter mailing.

Any queries, please contact Lynn Wild at [memsec.littleboroughu3a@gmail.com](mailto:memsec.littleboroughu3a@gmail.com) or phone 01706 372401.

Please inform Lynn if you **do not** wish to renew your membership. This will stop you receiving reminder emails or phone calls.

## **The Annual General Meeting and a call for New Committee Members**

The AGM for Littleborough U3A will be held on Monday June 13<sup>th</sup> at 2pm in the Coach House. The agenda will include election of the committee for the year 2023-24. All who are registered members of Littleborough U3A for the 2023-4 year are eligible to stand for the committee and to nominate members for the committee and vote in the elections which are held at the AGM. Further information and nomination forms will be sent to all members with the April newsletter.



**Don't let Littleborough  
u3a sink!**

U3As are all about members working together to share skills and knowledge and generate opportunities. We work together to organise and run all the events and activities. Though there are other ways to help (thank you helpers and group convenors!) we need at least 12 members each year to fill the places on the U3A management committee. We have a constitution that obliges committee members to stand down or change role after 3 years to give others a chance and to keep the U3A fresh and vibrant. We always hope that the committee will include members with different ideas and interests. Some who have been in the U3A for a while and some who are new. Not every member of the committee has a particular role but all of us take responsibility for some part of the work or for occasional tasks and we share responsibility for decisions about how best to serve the interests of our members. Committee meetings are held on the fourth Monday of each month at 10.30am.

At the Annual General Meeting in June this year a number of key committee members will be standing down. These include the Membership Secretary, the Business Secretary and the Groups Coordinator. So, we will be looking for new committee members, including those who may be willing to take on these key roles. Elections are held at the AGM in June but if you think you might be interested you would be welcome to come along to a committee meeting or to meet up with the current role holder to see what they do. Please talk to any committee member or telephone 07517 434368 if you want to discuss anything further. Meanwhile, here is what the current Business and Membership Secretaries and the Group Coordinator say about their roles:

### **Business Secretary Liz Walker**

*I began doing the Business Secretary role in early 2020 and was elected to the post in June 2020. The role of the Business Secretary is a varied one.... Supporting the Chairman, keeping the Charities Commission and the National u3a up to date with regard to committee changes, dealing with day to day correspondence, being the named link for Rochdale Online enquiries, organising the annual voting process for*

*committee membership, attending monthly meetings of the Committee and producing minutes.*

*It is a fulfilling role and provides a useful insight into the workings of the u3a. It is a good way to meet others and participate in the decisions taken for the local group. I will be retiring from the role in June but will be available, as a regular u3a member, to call on should the new Business Secretary need any information or help. I can also be contacted via the u3a phone (07517 434368) if you would like any further information about the role.*

### **Membership Secretary Lynn Wild**

*Having been on the committee from July 2019 and Membership Secretary for the past two years, I can honestly say that I have thoroughly enjoyed my time. It has sometimes been a little challenging, especially during Covid, but on the whole has been a very satisfying and rewarding experience.*

*You are (in most cases) the first port of call for new members and membership enquiries, in person, via the Website, email and occasionally by phone.*

*If you enjoy meeting and engaging with people, are able to attend most of the Monthly meetings and willing to learn how to use our database system (it's easy) then this is the role for you.*

*I will still be around as the Beacon (database) Site Administrator, so will still be on hand to help out.*

*If you want to find out more, please contact me at [lynnwild.u3a@gmail.com](mailto:lynnwild.u3a@gmail.com) or at the monthly meetings.*

### **Group Coordinator Gillian Pearson**

My role involves:

- Being the main point of contact with group convenors and providing support of various types as requested. Examples are supporting a change of convenor, supporting efforts to start a new group, assisting with queries of all types, keeping current information about the groups available for members to join
- Assisting with policies and procedures associated with running groups. A major focus in 2020-21 was the compilation of risk assessments as groups resumed face to face meetings. A variety of relevant policies and procedures are available on the main u3a website
- Since the monthly meetings resumed face to face the group co-ordinator has arranged the rota of volunteers to assist at the meetings
- Working with the speaker secretary where entertainment is to be provided by one or more of the local groups
- Prepare and deliver an annual group convenor meeting to provide updates and say thank you for ongoing work
- Answering queries generated via the online form located on the local u3a web page. This often requires liaison with other group convenors or committee members

## 2. Monthly Meetings

Our Speaker on **Monday the 13<sup>th</sup> of February** will be a Volunteer from **Manchester Blood Bikers**. This Charity provides the essential transfer of Blood, Plasma, Samples, Vaccines, Donated Breast Milk etc all around Greater Manchester and is run and operated completely by Volunteers.

I am sure you would like to support such a worthy charity by attending our meeting commencing at 2pm at Littleborough Coach House.

Please be in your seats for 1.50pm. Free Drink and biscuits and only £1.

The March monthly meeting is on Monday March 13<sup>th</sup> when **Michael Astrop** will talk about **Great British Brands**.



Please do bring your own cup to monthly meetings if you can. This helps to avoid the waste of the paper cups. Remember to take your cup home with you as well – sadly we don't have space to store it.

## 3. Outings

Sandra says: I am hoping to organize some visits this year starting in April. I will be advertising them as I book them. I would like to ensure that they will be popular, so if you have any suggestions, please let me know.

I am also wondering if there would be enough interest in a 3- or 4-day coach trip, possibly in October. Again, I would appreciate it if you let me know if you are interested. I am currently researching firms that offer these visits.

Sandra - sandrakokocki12@gmail.com

## 4. Foodies

### **FOODIES FEBRUARY EVENT** **Sunday February 26<sup>th</sup> at 12.30**



**Sunday Lunch at The Staff of Life in Cornholme,**

Please bring your £10 deposit to the meeting on February 13<sup>th</sup>, or pay by Bank Transfer.

Please contact Sandra on 07828297991 for details

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## FOODIES MARCH EVENT

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March meeting at 11:30

Come join us for lunch or a snack at **Gordon's Garden Tea Room**,  
Gordon Riggs Garden Centre, Walsden. (Located in the  
Garden Centre)



A chance to browse around the Garden Centre or Bottoms Mill. Then meet at 11:30 in the Tea Room to guarantee your table.

Prices range from £6.50 for Soup of the Day to £9.50 for Sandwiches, Wraps etc. to maximum £13.99 for main meals. A sample menu is available to view on Gordon Riggs website or at the next two monthly meetings.

Please register your interest at the February/ March monthly meeting or by emailing [lynnwild.u3a@gmail.com](mailto:lynnwild.u3a@gmail.com)

A deposit is not required for this event.

## 5. Group News

Photos on the website: since the problems with the national server for our website, all photos have disappeared from the site. As we don't have the originals of photos from the groups our website manager, Barrie Whitehead, is not able to reinstate these. If your group would like to include any photos on the group page on the website, please send these to Barrie and he will upload them (or do it yourself if you have the necessary permissions/knowledge).

### Group Dates

#### Quiz Group

February 16<sup>th</sup> Red Lion Pub at 2.30pm

Craft Group Hare Hill House 1.00pm -3.00pm

Thursday February 9<sup>th</sup> - Suffolk Puffs

Monday February 27<sup>th</sup> - Colour Wheel

History Group: there was a great turnout for the first meeting of the newly formed History Group and plans are now being worked through for a programme of activities and meetings. Details will be on the website in due course.

## The Wordsmith Groups

I expected great things of these groups and they did not disappoint me.

## Creative Writing Group 2

Ellen Cruise is in the process of setting up a new Creative Writing Group – because the one below is full and there is more creative talent to exploit among our U3A members. I'm thinking of joining myself. But I promise I won't practice in the newsletter. We stick to facts here. I can't make them rhyme!

## Creative writing Group 1



- Creative Writing Group 1 has 10 members
- We meet at 1pm on the last Thursday of the month at Hare Hill House
- We each pay £2.50 to cover the hire of the room
- Currently there are no spaces in this group, (but Creative writing Group 2 is in the throes of setting up with Ellen Cruise)

Back row: Liz, Sue, Marilyn, Janet

Front row: Pat, Denise, Julie.

Missing: Ken, Margaret, Jo

Our group is one of the longest running groups in the Littleborough u3a, initially set up by Ellen Cruise, it met in members' homes. I joined the group after attending a u3a Christmas party at the Coach House where the Creative Writing Group were performing some of their work. I was so impressed by what I heard, I decided I would like to be able to try to do the same. That was 6 or more years ago and I'm still learning!

In 2019 the group acquired funding to compile an anthology of poems about ageing. As well as our own members, we invited the whole of the u3a and people throughout the borough to contribute to the anthology. We produced '**Age – it's just a number**' in 2020. If you are interested in purchasing a copy, please get in touch ([suetemperleyu3a@outlook.com](mailto:suetemperleyu3a@outlook.com))



When Ellen decided to step down, our much-missed Fran Moir took over and she guided us brilliantly throughout Lockdown with monthly Zoom sessions. Once we were able to meet face-to-face again, we decided to use Hare Hill House as our numbers had increased. Sadly, Fran became unwell and, tragically, died in May 2022, which is when I took over as Convenor – she is a hard act to follow.

### So, what happens at our Creative writing sessions?



Each session is very informal and is led by one of the group. In a typical session, firstly, each person reads out in turn what they have written followed by discussion and constructive criticism. After a break for a drink a biscuit and a chat, the member who is leading will introduce a 10-minute writing exercise after which we each,

once again, read out our efforts. There is usually quite a bit of hilarity surrounding this part of the session!!!! In a recent activity Janet had written random objects on pieces of paper and each member was invited to pick 3 and





then write a piece including all three words. I ended up with 'photo frame, cushion and chainsaw' - my 10-minute piece was a mixture of Cluedo and Happy Valley!!!

Before we finish our meetings, the member who is leading the session chooses our next writing topic for homework. Some recent themes have been: 'The Summer of Love'; 'Using any aspect of your star sign, compose a story or poem'; 'The invitation'; 'the water looked black....

During our sessions, no matter what the topic, we always cover the gamut of emotions and ideas which stimulates endless discussion. Our Creative Writing Group is never boring!!

Sue Temperley, January 2023

### Reading Group 1

Reading Group 1 met yesterday and discussed our latest personal favourite read. I asked the group members to think about what the group means to them, their words follow.

*It's a friendly Reading Group where everyone can express an opinion and be listened to.*

*It's a pleasant way to pass a Saturday morning.*

*We read authors that you might never take off the shelf and sometimes you are pleasantly surprised.*

*We read all sorts of different genres.*

*Group members have very different views of the books we read, our discussions can go off in many different directions. This just keeps our meetings interesting and never boring.*

*The group keeps you thinking.*

*You always have a choice and are under no obligation to read the book if it isn't to your taste.*

The group has twelve or so members but is unfortunately full at present. We feel if discussions are to be inclusive that we can't really take on any more members.

Alison Gavagan

### Readers Group 2

We meet online over Zoom at 7.30pm on the third Tuesday of each month. We are currently a group of eleven, and have space for one more member to join us. The only cost to members is the purchase of the books that we read (if unavailable in the library). Some of our members listen to the books on Audible or similar platform. We read mainly fiction, with the occasional non-fiction/autobiography in the mix for good measure. Books are chosen by the members of the group and we have a long-list of potential reads suggested by members as time progresses, which we vote on, twice a year. Our confirmed reads through to October 2023 are:

Tuesday 21st February - [The Late Train to Gipsy Hill](#) (Alan Johnson) [[audible link](#)] (our current read)

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> March - [Abide with Me](#) (Elizabeth Strout) [[audible link](#)]

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> April - [Shuggie Bain](#) (Douglas Stuart) [[audible link](#)]

Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May - [The Whistleblower](#) (Robert Peston) [[audible link](#)]

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June - [The Abstainer](#) (Ian McGuire) [[audible link](#)]

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> July - [The Prosecutor](#) (Nasir Afzal) [[audible link](#)]

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> August - [Notes from an Exhibition](#) (Patrick Gale) [[audible link](#)]

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September - [The Plot Against America](#) (Philip Roth) [[audible link](#)]

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October - [The Water Dancer](#) (Ta-Nehisi Coates) [[audible link](#)]

Drop me an email to [m.j.pearson@me.com](mailto:m.j.pearson@me.com) or phone me on 07981 271005 if you are interested in joining.

## **The Philosophy Group 19<sup>th</sup> Jan 2023**

We are a group of 9 people. We meet in our homes taking it in turns to host if it's possible for us to fit 9 in. The host usually provides a hot drink and biscuits or cake. Everyone contributes 50p to offset costs.

A simple definition of the word PHILOSOPHY is quite literally "the love of wisdom"

In a broad sense, philosophers seek to understand fundamental truths about themselves, the world in which they live and their relationships to that world and to each other.

All of us in the group are seeking wisdom and although we have many years of life and a wide range of life experience between us, I don't think any of us would claim to have found it yet.

The group has been meeting for many years and over that time some people have moved on and new members have joined. We study the work of philosophers from the ancient past up to the current day mainly European or American but and we also occasionally look at philosophy from further afield in the world.

During lockdown one of our members geared himself up to use ZOOM and sent us all guidance on how to join in. So, we were lucky in that we could carry on with our sessions and meet monthly over that time. Keeping our brains working and enjoying the social contact.

We are back to meeting in person now. We all look forward to meeting but discussion can get heated at times. We can be fiery philosophers.

If you fancy joining us presently you would have to be on a waiting list but do let me know if you would like be a member of the group in the future.

We meet on the last Wednesday in the month and from 10am to 12 am.

Valerie Bracken, Group Convenor



## Poetry Appreciation

The U3A Poetry Appreciation Group meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday of the month at 10am in Littleborough Library, Hare Hill Park.

Each month we choose a subject or Poet for discussion at our next meeting. On Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> January we will read and discuss our personal selections of Poetry by Women. The Librarian also collects a selection of books on our chosen subject, which is useful for anyone who hasn't managed to bring something with them. Our subjects last year included Irish Poets, Love Poems, Nature, Horses, the Sea, the list is endless and the search very enjoyable.

At present the group has ten members, which we feel is the optimum number to enable everyone to take part and importantly fit round the large table in the reading room of the library.

From feedback from our members, it is a very rewarding and relaxing group and I would recommend those people who are still interested to get together and form a second group. I can be contacted on the U3A website for advice or help.

Convenor Marilyn Aldred

Honestly, these wordsmith groups are really impressive. Well done all of you. So next month let's look at a different set of intellectual activities: the games groups. These include: Bridge, Chess, Scrabble, Mahjong, and the Quiz Group.

6. And finally, here is a lovely winter photograph from Roger Crossley to remind us of what we are shortly going to be leaving behind. Keep warm and I look forward to seeing you at U3A events in the near future. Very best wishes to you all.

Jo Wiggans

jowiggans@sky.com

