

u3a learn,
laugh,
live

March

[www. u3asites.org.uk/march](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/march)

Registered Charity Number 1172951

MARCH CAMBS

ANNUAL REPORTS

OCTOBER 2021 – OCTOBER 2022



The Object of March u3a is :

**The advancement of education and,
in particular, the education of older people and
those who are retired from full time work by any
means, including associated activities conducive to
learning and personal development, who reside in
March, Cambridgeshire, and the surrounding area.**

**The Third Age is defined as the period of time after
the first age of childhood dependence and the
second age of full time employment and/or parental
responsibility.**

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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

It only seems like a few months ago we had the last AGM. Since last October we have slowly returned to normal. At the last AGM held in October 2021 we welcomed Lynda Andrews, April Hammond and Dorothy Hughes onto the committee. Lynda took the role as Group Co-Ordinator, April as speaker secretary and Dorothy as vice chairperson.

We have had some interesting speakers over the last year on a variety of subjects and we hope to maintain the standard moving forwards.

Some groups have unfortunately been disbanded, some new ones have started and at least one has been resurrected. In August of this year, thanks to Wendy Gardner, the Theatre Group had their first trip since lockdown to see Blood Brothers in Milton Keynes. Hopefully many more will be arranged next year.

The committee resurrected the coffee morning, however the attendance is very low and unless we get more people this is likely to be discontinued.

Some people, as a result of the pandemic, decided not to renew their membership, however we are now making up numbers again. I believe there is still a reluctance for people to attend groups and monthly meetings due to a fear of COVID which I fully understand. We should soon be called for a further booster and hopefully this will reassure people

The committee arranged two social occasions this year, one in February for those who could not attend the Christmas lunch and a second in June to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Both occasions went extremely well and much positive feedback was received from those who were present.

This year we will not be having a Christmas lunch due to increasing costs and the reluctance of suppliers to commit to a price this far in advance. However we are planning a Christmas Party which we hope you will attend and enjoy.

I would like to thank all the committee for their hard work over the year, as well as everyone who helps in any way. Without the committee, volunteers and group leaders there would not be March U3A

Finally, we are always open to new ideas and positive contributions at any time, so if you have a suggestion or a comment to make please contact any member of the committee.

Pauline Horton

TREASURER'S REPORT

Here we are again, coming up to our u3a Annual General Meeting where we need to tell you how we are doing. Our financial year, as you may know, runs from the first day of March to the last day of February the following year.

You will, of course, remember the 2020 to 2021 year was a Covid disaster and because of this your committee decided to give a free membership year for 2021 to 2022 to all those of you who had paid for the previous year. This of course used up our small amount of reserves, which was not helped by the u3a Head Office requiring an additional 50p on our Capitation payments, putting it up to £3.50 per member as well as an increase in the magazine delivery costs. We got through the year with just under £2000 left in our current account down from nearly £6000 which, considering the lack of income, was not a bad outcome.

Group account money ring-fenced for individual groups remains healthy.

So in their wisdom your committee asked you to accept an increase in the Membership fee of £1 up to £16 at the last AGM, to help cover the increases for the following year. This helped us get through the year so far and should cover the next few months of the financial year. However the u3a Head Office is, we are told, going to put up the Capitation fee per member to £4 next year. In addition, with the advent of 10% inflation, it is quite probable that hall hire charges will increase for many of our meetings.

So what to do? Your membership fee at present includes the five Third Age Magazines (TAM) that approximately fifty percent of members choose to receive throughout the year. I shall propose at the AGM this year that TAM should be separated from the membership fee so that you no longer receive them as part of your membership payment. You may still receive TAM by paying an additional fee which is likely to be around £3.00 and this would come into force from April next year. This will save us a reasonable amount to help us cope with other financial changes.

So we are holding our own financially, and our groups are doing well in what has been a difficult time. You will receive a copy of the Statement of Accounts up to the end of February 2022, on or before the AGM in October.

Dave Walton

BEACON ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM

The System functions well, with over 500 u3a's using it. There have been upgrades to improve various functions,

The System holds all our Membership Details, Groups with access to Group Leaders, and all our Financial accounts.

Overall it seems a reasonable system for what we need and which keeps our personal information safe, and secure. It's backed up every night to two different Servers, and for £1 per head seems good value.

The Email System has been improved and there are far fewer failures, give or take, although the Talktalk Server seems to reject emails way more than any others.

There was a tidy up of Password entry and changes to make it easier, and some tweaking of the financial package.

We have a backup Beacon administrator in Steve Hoskyn, our Membership Secretary, which is a good backup for me.

Steve also backs up Colin Head who looks after our March u3a Website. So your u3a administration is well looked after, and with the rest of your excellent Committee dealing with all that's coming our way, the future looks good.

Dave Walton (Beacon Admin)

GROUP REPORTS 2022

BIRDWATCHING REPORT

Since my last annual report in August 2021 our group has continued with our days out every month. We only had to cancel once due to a bad weather forecast, and as that was February it was not really a surprise.

It has been good to get back into the routine of monthly outings after Covid.

We haven't added any new destinations, but have been happy to go to places we hadn't seen for so long: Wicken Fen, Titchwell (twice - always a favourite), Kingfisher Bridge, Sculthorpe, Rutland, Lackford Lakes, Paxton Pits, and Lakenheath. We've seen lots of lovely birds, and of course other wildlife. And we know it's very good for us to get out into the natural world.

The Group has been running successfully since 2012, therefore it is our 10th anniversary this year!

We are always happy to welcome new members so why not try us out?

Margaret Lloyd



CRAFT GROUP

When we restarted we moved to the Braza Club and this enabled us to be socially distanced while having plenty of room for the goods and chattels which accompany us when we are working on our projects.

We were glad to see each other after the break and have been meeting each week since, with an occasional outing to Springfield's and for afternoon tea.

Some of our members have moved away: one to Derbyshire and another to Scotland. We keep in touch though. We have had some new members and some drop-ins, although someone did say we were rather noisy and they did not come back.

We have a core membership who come most weeks but anyone can drop in or out as they wish. Knitting and sewing are more popular when the nights start drawing in.

Everyone is welcome and we are happy to help with craft problems when they arise, someone usually knows how to do it.

Currently macrame, card making, beading, quilting, knitting, crochet and paper modelling are taking place. We enjoy seeing what people have made and the lively discussions that generally take place when like-minded people are together.

The group has proved to be a way to get back into the swing of things after COVID and has been a support during these difficult times.

New crafts and members are welcomed. Come along any Tuesday afternoon, you might enjoy it.

Lynda Andrews

CRIB (CRIBBAGE)

It has been a happy year in the Crib Group. We coped well with the changing rules and procedures of the pandemic and managed to avoid any transmission of the virus among our members, as far as I know. Not once did we have to cancel our meeting which continues to be held in The Olde Griffin Hotel, High Street, March.

The management kindly reserve 'The Quiet Room' for us, though sometimes I think that is a misnomer as some of our games can be quite lively.

We meet every 2nd and 4th Monday, starting play at 2 pm and finishing about 4 pm. I asked the Group if they would like to return to our old venue, The Ship PH, but it was a unanimous desire to stay where we are.

Two of our members have joined a local Crib league in Wimblington but there is not enough interest for us to join a league as a group. Membership has varied from 12 to 16 players, losing some for various reasons but also gaining some. Currently there are 12 on the books.

New members are welcome and lessons can be given if they wish to learn the game. There is no charge for the room but I do recommend that players buy something from the bar.

So, as we approach the end of our seventh year, I see no reason why the Group shouldn't continue to thrive.

Colin Head

FLOWER ARRANGING GROUP

The Flower Arranging sessions resumed on 14th April 2022 after Covid-19 close down. There are 4 of us in this group, making it a nice size group.

April 14th 2022 - Low Table Centre piece was made by the group



May 12th 2022 - Queen Elizabeth 2nd Jubilee arrangement



June 9th 2022 - Tall arrangements



FRENCH CONVERSATION

When we meet in the library on Tuesday mornings there are other activities going on around us - sometimes a craft group, sometimes a school visit, sometimes children singing nursery rhymes while we are chatting in French about holidays, food, art and life in general.

We could almost be in a pavement cafe enjoying a glass of wine after visiting the market! Almost but not quite. We have no wine but we are enjoying keeping up our French and gaining confidence in using it. Any level of knowledge is welcome, don't worry if you are rusty. We won't have wine but you can buy a coffee from the library's machine and pretend.

Lynda Andrews

GARDENING GROUP 1

I took over the leadership of this group earlier in the year and our first meeting was at my home where we discussed what we wanted from the group and what we liked to grow in our gardens.

Following our first meeting we have met in three other members' gardens, all different but very beautiful despite the challenging conditions. We have been very fortunate to have been able to be outside for all but one meeting. A quiz was compiled by one member who had tagged several unusual plants in his garden for us to identify.

As time goes on we hope to get more 'hands on' and we are hoping to visit Anglesey Abbey's winter garden early next year.

At present I have a full quota for the group but if you are interested please let me know and I can add you to the waiting list.

Janet Hoskyn

GARDENING GROUP 2

Meeting on the second Monday of each month Gardening 2 Group members discuss specific gardening topics, exchange plants and seeds, hold a quiz (with prizes) to test members' knowledge, and occasionally visit relevant gardens or garden centres.

The Group Leader demonstrates various subjects such as how to take soft wood cuttings, pruning Spring shrubs, making home made cosmetics like Lavender Nail Oil and Cucumber Face Cream, creating flower bombs and garden toadstools, to sampling herbal teas from the garden and different cakes made from a variety of vegetables.



The Group managed to visit Bressingham Gardens near Diss in Norfolk for the day in June. Contact me if you are interested in joining this Group. Numbers are limited to a maximum of fourteen as the meetings are held in the Group Leader's home.

Sue Robinson

PRACTICAL ART GROUP SEPTEMBER 2021 - AUGUST 2022

We have had eleven meetings and tackled a range of subjects. Which have included Animals, Action, Christmas, Comedy, The Sea, Insects, Something Italian, Seaside Visit, Sports and Glass Objects. We all enjoyed the challenges and were pleased with the results.

We are a self help group as we do not have a tutor so we help and encourage each other. Some of our members have been painting and drawing for many years and are able to pass on their knowledge to others. We are a very friendly group with lots of social interaction at meetings.

At each meeting we decide between us what the next subject will be. This is not compulsory but helps to focus ideas. All members are always free to choose their own subjects.

We meet in the library in the Wordsworth Room which is large and has lots of natural light. Our meetings are every fourth Tuesday 10am -12 noon.

We welcome new members. A tutor would be wonderful and I would be willing to continue as administrator if requested.

Ann Smith



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Science and Technology Group has been meeting every fourth Wednesday since before the start of this year. To begin with the format was that the group watched a program from the series "Understanding the Inventions That Changed the World" covering subjects such as Metallurgy, Beer, Wines and Spirits, The Galley, Crossbows, Roman Arches, Pagodas, Cathedrals, Telescopes and Nuclear Power and then a program from the "The Joy of Science" series in which we have covered Celestial Mechanics, Newton's Laws of Motion, Gravitation, The Nature of Energy, The Laws of Thermodynamics, Entropy and Electricity.

More recently, thanks to the background of our most recent member, we have had access to some of the BBC's archives so that we have been able to watch a selection of documentaries from the last forty years or so.

Next month we have a visit planned by a Cambridge Doctor of Cosmology who will give a presentation and then try to answer all our questions on Life, the Universe and Everything. It is planned to follow this with further presentations from external contributors.

Finally, I have been trying to put together a presentation that will attempt to take some of the mystery out of Quantum Mechanics for all those interested in the sub-microscopic.

Steve Hoskyn

Da Vinci's design for a simple, portable and easy to assemble bridge.

