

September 2023

Phone National Office: 0208 466 6139 [u3a.org.uk](http://u3a.org.uk)



## Introduction from Sam Mauger

Dear friends,

Over the last few years, the newsletter has grown and developed and you have shared within it many stories and opportunities from across the movement.

We are now a community of people and the conversation we are having with each other covers a whole range of topics, ideas and interests.

Many of you have emailed following the newsletters, setting out your personal experiences about what the u3a means to you.

This feeling of friendship is at the heart of the newsletter, because that is what is so special about the u3a. Going forward we want to reflect our sense of togetherness in the newsletter.

We are people who support all that the u3a stands for as Friends of u3a. As Friends we can identify all the continued opportunities, ideas, services and interests that our great community bring together to share with one another.

With very best wishes

Sam Mauger

CEO of the Third Age Trust

## News from the Trust

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### Our movement celebrates u3a week

From Dundee to Penzance, u3a members got out and about in their community during u3a week. There were beach cleans, table tennis tournaments and open days. The smiling faces in your pictures are a testament to how much fun being a member of the u3a movement can be.

*Pictured, Bromley u3a at their showcase event at Bromley Little Theatre where they recruited six new members.*

### Update on our anniversary woodland

The u3a movement planted almost 10,000 trees as part of our u3a anniversary woodland. We are regularly in conversation with the arborists who look after our woodland and are delighted that our trees, whilst still very small and growing amidst competitive vegetation, are generally doing well. This is after surviving the hottest and driest summer in south Wales in modern history.



Our woodland is planted for future generations and we will enjoy seeing them take root and grow over the years to become strong and established. We hope to organise a u3a visit at a suitable time in the future when there is more to see.

## Sources Blog

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### u3a One Movement

u3a week showcased how, though we are spread across the UK, we are all connected together as one movement. We asked Trustees to tell us what they think 'One Movement' really means when it is used to describe u3a.

John Bent, Trustee, says, "To me, the term One Movement sums up the vision the founders of the u3a had at its inception. A national, and international, organisation encouraging third agers to partake of self-help, lifelong learning through local u3as."

Liz Thackray, Chair of u3a, says "A family comes to mind. We have a common lineage and have a family likeness, but we express ourselves in different ways and have different roles while being part of the same whole."

Allan Walmsley, Vice Chair of u3a, says "When new members join their local u3as, u3a membership provides opportunities way beyond those provided by their local u3as, including network and regional activities, national learning activities and national projects."

## A new u3a film

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### A new film celebrating Hayling Island u3a's Sea Shanty group

On the eve of u3a week, we launched a new u3a film, showcasing the sea shanty group at Hayling Island u3a. It has since received over 5,000 views on YouTube. The transcript of the film is below.

#### Transcript

[John, Shanty group leader] Shanties began way back in the 1700s to help the sailors on the boats. You can imagine the guys pulling on the ropes, pulling on the anchor. It gave them a bit of camaraderie and at the end of the day, they'd probably all sit around and sing a few songs as well.

I wanted to sing shanties but couldn't find a group on Hayling which is strange because it's an island.

I came to the u3a and said I'd like to start a shanty group and it's built up from there in very few months.

[Liz, Shanty group member] I have neuropathic pain and I can usually forget it when I'm singing. I thought sea shanties looked like it would be fun, easy to do, easy to learn.

[Caryl, Shanty group member] I initially got an email – "If I started a sea shanty choir would anyone be interested?" I immediately wrote back, probably one of the first to say yes.

My anxiety can be pretty bad. Once I'm there singing, I just feel so much better for it. It's just so uplifting.

[Jerry, Shanty group member] My wife has a rare version of Alzheimer's and she went into residential care and that just fills your life up. I'm really really grateful to u3a's sea shanty group. It's been a fabulous learning opportunity for me and the boost it's given me in terms of filling that bit of my life, I can't say thank you enough.

[Liz] u3a is an organisation that gives people this enormous choice of activity and if you don't find what you want, you can set it up yourself.

[John] If you want to start a group, we don't turn anyone away, come and join in, you'll learn. The good thing is that people do come to us who have had difficult circumstances but they really enjoy coming and joining the group and having a good sing.

[Jerry] Other people should get involved with the u3a primarily because of the opportunity to meet new friends and have new experiences. This group is just such fun which really makes you look forward to coming every week.

## News from the Board

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### Liz Thackray, Chair of the Third Age Trust

This is a busy time of year. We have just celebrated u3a week – and it has been great to see the photos and hear of all the events. Now the final preparations are in hand for the AGM. The newly elected Trustees, who will join the Board following the AGM, are meeting staff and others as part of their induction process. We are saying our goodbyes to colleagues who will be leaving the Board.

During the past months, we have been exploring the possible benefits and format for a u3a council and have held multiple pilot council meetings. The third of these was on 20 September and included representatives from all the regions and nations and from Network Link.

## u3as in the Media

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### u3a week results in a media splash

It has been wonderful to hear of all the u3as securing coverage in the local media, which has been especially common in the run up to u3a week.

- **Yahoo UK News** – Hayling Island u3a Sea Shanties.
- **The Pensioner magazine** – full page splash on u3a.
- **The Oban Times** – a feature on Oban u3a's birthday.
- **The North Edinburgh News** – Judith from Edinburgh u3a spoke about laughter yoga.
- **The David Fitzgerald Show on BBC Radio Devon** – David from Teignmouth u3a had his ninth guest appearance.
- **The Ashbourne News Telegraph** – a page dedicated to Ashbourne u3a welcoming their 500th member.
- **Hassocks Life** – described Hassocks, Hurts and Ditchling u3a as 'thriving'.
- **Sussex Life** – a feature on Lancing & Sompting u3a's showcase.
- **The Finish Line** – Telford u3a member Rita appeared on the quiz show and spoke about her u3a.



## Our Impact

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### Debating Positive Ageing

u3a have shared new conversations with members and academics exploring positive ageing. Liz Ervine, u3a's Trustee for Scotland, and Sandi Rickerby, u3a's Trustee for the North East, were joined by Dr Melanie Lovatt, Dr Alan Gow, Shelagh Young, Susan Murray and Dr Dwight Tse.

When asked what positive ageing meant to her, Sandi said, "I am in the process, I hope, of positive ageing. For me it's a time to be who you are, to develop skills that you didn't have when you were working necessarily or to continue to use skills that you had when you were working. To feel valued and to feel that you have something to offer – but equally that there's something out there for you."

## u3a news

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### South East Forum Summer School

u3as across the South East braved the heat to learn and have fun together with sessions including Cycling (pictured), Yoga and Mindfulness, Archaeology and a Quiz. Everyone was in high spirits and, despite the high temperatures, had fun learning new things and connecting with other members from across the county. More news on summer schools will be shared in the November edition of Third Age Matters.



### Crawley u3a Open Afternoon

Over 250 potential and existing members visited Crawley u3a when they held their Open Afternoon earlier this month. The event was an opportunity not only to recruit new members, but for existing members to renew their annual membership and to discover new groups.



### Culm Valley u3a showcase their artistic talent

Culm Valley u3a recently showcased the work of their art groups in an arts and crafts exhibition – including drawings by members who did not draw at all a year ago (pictured.)

The exhibition was a huge collective effort from each of the five art groups, the committee members and other members who took photographs and generally contributed to the afternoon's success.



## Your Stories

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I was delighted to visit Verulam u3a in St Albans for a second time. I am very pleased to have been involved with this u3a during my time as Trustee and wish them very well for the future. I have been invited to attend as a guest whenever I wish, and I shall do just that.

I recently also had the pleasure of joining Thurrock u3a for their 21st Anniversary lunch. The lunch was delicious and the friendliness of the members outstanding. The chair, Paul, is clearly doing something right. He has a very proactive and enthusiastic committee of 18, with five waiting to go on the committee. Absolutely wonderful. I wish Thurrock well, keep up the good work!

*Barbara Cordina, Trustee for East of England*

## Spotlight On:

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### Gill and Greg Cockermouth u3a members and Subject Advisers for Ballroom Dancing



*As BBC's Strictly Come Dancing returns to our screen – this time with the oldest contestant ever Angela Rippon, u3a Subject Advisers for Ballroom Dancing Gill and Greg spoke about their love of the sport.*

Gill : "To enjoy ballroom dancing, all you need is the right attitude. It doesn't matter if you think you have two left feet, because it can all be worked on.

"You don't have to be the top of the tree at dancing, if you have a ready smile on your face and you're happy to have a bit of a giggle, you will enjoy it."

Greg: "It's good for bone health, circulation, posture and it is great discipline for maintaining balance. Dancing also helps keep the memory active because you must remember the moves."

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Headline photos: u3as celebrating u3a week – Lymm & Thelwall u3a's Alfresco in Autumn event, Barnsley u3a's stall at a community event, Upholland & District u3a's stall at a local shopping centre.