

Dear u3a member,  
Welcome to our May Newsletter.

Our Annual General Meeting is in June, and this Newsletter provides important information about the AGM that I urge you to read. The ethos of the u3a is about retired people passing on their work-life knowledge to others; through giving we gain.

I have included a further section about places of local, historical interest. This time, it is about the wonderful Brandwood End Cemetery. Do, please, let me have any suggestions for future issues.

Please continue to send your letters, creative works and local photos to:  
[ken's email](#).

With every good wish from Ken Fisher, Editor

### In this month's newsletter

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## Message from our Chair, Ray Tier

A major landmark this month has been our move to The Shires retirement complex as the new regular venue for our monthly meetings, and some group meetings. Our first monthly meeting was held there on Wednesday 19 April very successfully. 65 members attended and were treated to free tea or coffee before the start. There were a few audio and video problems but they have since been sorted out ready for our next meeting. The venue is a brand-new building with modern facilities and large carpark and is accessible by the 11 (Swanshurst Lane), 1 (College Road) and 5 bus routes. Our next monthly meeting will be there on Wednesday 17 May, followed by our AGM and talk on Wednesday 14 June. After that monthly meetings will be scheduled to take place on the second Tuesday of the month, starting with Tuesday 11 July, as you voted for in our recent members' poll.

With the AGM coming up in June, I would like to urge you again to consider standing for the committee. Ken Fisher is obliged by the Constitution to retire from his post as Secretary at the AGM as he has held it for three years but will be seeking to remain on the committee in a non-officer role to provide full support for his replacement. This would be an excellent opportunity for someone to stand for the post of Secretary in the knowledge that they would have the fullest possible support and assistance from Ken. In fact if no one stands for that post we will have a constitutional problem because that is a post that is mandatory to fill so the future of the committee and the whole u3a is in jeopardy if no replacement can be found. Ken's article later in this newsletter describes the role in more detail. Please help your u3a to continue to flourish by volunteering for this role!

As some of you may already know, the Beacon login process has changed. You will now be able to log in just by inputting your email address and password, which you can set up yourself (and will be able to reset yourself if you forget it in future). The first time you log in to do this, you will need to input your full set of login credentials as you used in the past, but thereafter the process will be much easier. The Membership page of our website contains full details of how it all works.

For those of you have renewed your subscriptions, thank you and welcome to another year's membership of the u3a! For those who haven't yet done so, I would remind you that your membership subscriptions are now overdue!

## Events and reminders

### Drop in for a coffee and chat at Fletcher's Bar



Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May. from 10:30 to 12:00 at Fletcher's Bar in York Road in Kings Heath.

We have the front room to ourselves. You just need to pay for your own drink at the counter in The Kitchen Garden café, cost will depend on your choice of drink. We will provide biscuits. All access is through the Kitchen Garden Cafe, this includes Disabled access but if required they can

also put up a ramp at the front door of Fletchers provided you let them know in advance.

Any questions call me, Tessa Bidgood  
or speak to Val Baxter

### Lunches

#### [A message from Carey Baff](#)

Another lunch has been booked for Thursday 8 June at 12.30 pm at the College of Food in town. We don't have the menu as yet, but they always offer lovely choices at a very lovely price (last time £16.00 for 2 courses, £19.00 for 3, plus drinks and service). What's more you get really, really lovely company!

So, if you would like to come along please contact Carey

### Monthly Meetings

#### [A message from Janet Burgess, our Social Secretary](#)

#### [Monthly Meeting on 11th of April](#)

There was a pleasing turnout on Tuesday 11 th April for the two tours of The Shires to see the spaces that could be venues for some of our groups. It was a good opportunity to see the Village Hall, location of the monthly meetings, and try out their cafe. Feedback was very positive.

Wednesday 19 April: Jon Bloomfield addressed the monthly meeting.

A good turnout of 65 enjoyed hearing from Jon about the way migrants to our city, predominantly since the 1960s, have brought creativity, cultural diversity and economic benefits to Birmingham. Evidence of the members' appreciation was indicated by the purchase of a dozen of his books. The free refreshments were also much appreciated.

[Next monthly meeting: Wednesday May 17th 2-4 pm. The Shires](#)

We are very pleased to have a volunteer from within our membership, Jane Colbourne , who will be talking about her voluntary work with the Canal Trust . She will cover some of the history of canals and the current wildlife/ gardening work that keeps our network in a healthy state.

We do hope to see another good attendance.

Please note: doors will open at 1.45 not 1.30. Refreshments will be available as before.

Of course, you are welcome to come much earlier and have a light lunch in the cafe which currently closes at 4 pm. In case they are still having issues with card readers, please bring cash as well.

### Advance notice:

The AGM will be on the SECOND Wednesday in June i.e. June 14th and we will have a speaker afterwards from the auction house of Biddle and Webb.

From July we are reverting to meeting for the monthly talks on second Tuesdays.

It has been very helpful and pleasing to have received details of future possible speakers from you, the members. Thank you. This year is fully booked and 2024 is starting to have slots filled. Any suggested speakers may therefore not be heard for many months to come.

### Games group

There was no interest shown by our members for this.

## Birmingham and District Guild of Weavers, Spinners and Dyers.

### A message from our member, Wendy Simpson

Wendy Simpson wishes to advise members that the Birmingham and District Guild have an open day exhibition at the Quaker Meeting House, Watford Road, Cotteridge, B30 1JB on Saturday, 13th of May between 10.30 and 3.30. Entry is free, and you can have a go at weaving and spinning if you fancy a try.

## Interest Group Matters

### Opportunities

#### Audio Book Group



Do you enjoy reading? If you are finding it increasingly difficult to see the words on the printed page this can be a real issue. How about a book group which accommodates those who wish to use Audio Books? This could be one which deals ONLY in this type of book or it could be a mixture of traditional and audio.

Contact Anne if you are interested in being part of setting up such a group.

#### Circle Dancing



This group meets on the second and fourth Thursday of the month between 2pm and 4pm, at the Friends Meeting House in Cotteridge. Contact Jackie Spearpoint if you would like to join them

#### Talk Film



Talk Film is moving venue! From 24th May the group will be meeting at The Shires, from 1pm to 4pm. Further details can be found on the website by signing into the Members Portal, more of which below!

### South Birmingham Network News

There may be opportunities for MKHDu3a members to attend groups in Edgbaston/Harborne u3a where there are vacancies. Some of these groups are given below. Please contact Anne in the first instance if you are interested.

Edgbaston/Harborne have vacancies in Card/Board games, Ancient Rome, Games, Creative Writing, Local History, Play Reading, and USA History, Politics and Culture, Kings Norton welcome new members to some of their groups to include Bird Watching, Cinema Visits, Climate Change Action, Dog Walking and Exploring World Faiths.

A new group, organising visits to Ballet, Opera and Musicals was recently set up at KNu3a. If you would like to be informed of forthcoming performances, please contact the Group Leader, Dr Peter Rookes,, and he will add you to their mailing list.

## Members' Portal

This can be found through the MKHDu3a website, <https://u3asites.org.uk/mkhdu3a/groups>.

The way in which information about the various groups can be accessed has recently changed. When you go to the portal, you are asked to input your membership number (you can find this on the email you were sent inviting you to renew your membership) and a few other personal details. This generates a new login, inviting you to put in your email address and you then create your own password. In future this will be the way in which you get into the members area. If you forget your password, you will have an opportunity to reset it.

If you change your email, however, you will need to contact our membership secretary, Faith Walsh, and she will change it for you on the system. Hopefully this will provide a more straightforward method of accessing information!

## Health and Safety

Please inform your Group Leader or a member of our Executive Committee of any H&S concerns that you may have, so that these can be fully addressed as soon as possible. Risk Assessment documents can be found on the [National u3a site](#) by following the menu link – Support for u3a's. However, you will need to log-in (and create an account if you do not have one) to enable you to search for relevant information.

## Local History – Brandwood End Cemetery

In the nineteenth century the massive increase in urban populations in the industrial areas of England meant that the traditional burial grounds provided by churches could not cope with the rapidly increasing death rate, exacerbated by epidemics such as cholera.



The problem was initially resolved by commercial companies that would charge fees for providing burial facilities. Key Hill Cemetery in the Jewellery Quarter, founded in 1834, is an early example of such an enterprise. Eventually, the government took charge, and local Burial Boards were set up to build and manage cemeteries. Brandwood End was one such cemetery, and was formally opened on 13th of April 1899. The first burial was that of five-year old Charles Downes from Balsall Heath, and flowers are still to be seen on his grave, thanks to the Friends of Brandwood End Cemetery.

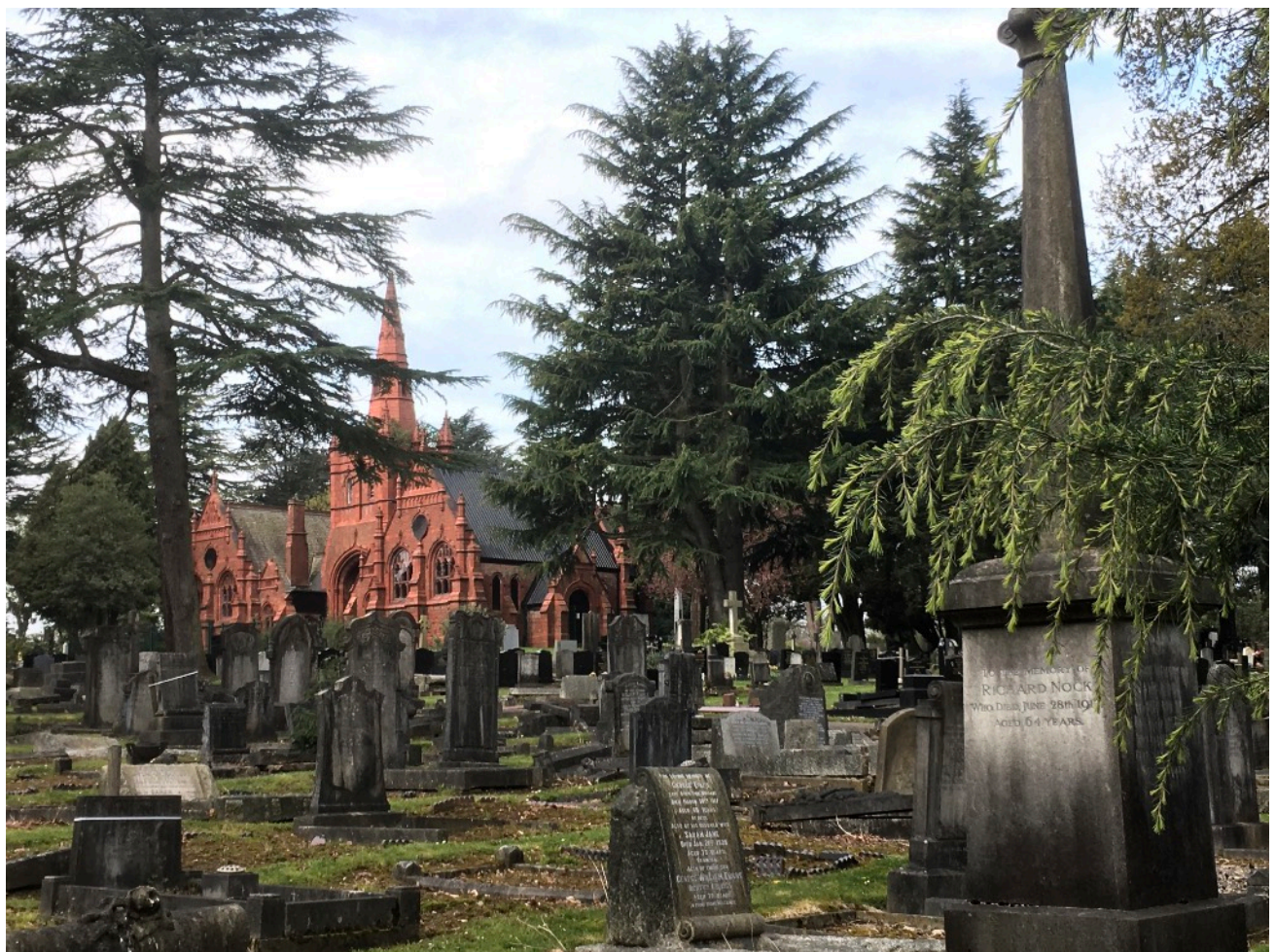
Grave of Charles Downes.  
First burial in Brandwood



The site currently occupies fifty-three acres of land with the central, high point being crowned with a pair of magnificent mortuary chapels. These were designed, Mr J. Brewin Holmes, a Birmingham architect, and are built in the neo-gothic-terracotta style that was fashionable at the time. The mortuary chapel on the east was for Non-conformists, and the chapel on the west consecrated for Anglican services. The chapels are [Grade II listed](#) by English Heritage and the Cemetery itself is [Grade II listed](#).

The cemetery grounds are laid out in a style typical of the time with tree-lined avenues that are well worth a pleasant stroll on a sunny day. In terms of historic, cultural interest, the architecture and landscape design of Brandwood End indicates, not just a response to an increasing burial need, but demonstrates a desire of Victorian and Edwardian societies to ostentatiously honour their departed.

More information and news can be seen at the Friends of Brandwood Cemetery [web site](#)



Southern view of chapels. The green of the conifers complementing the terracotta of the chapels

## Membership matters

### Membership renewal

Thank you to all of you who have renewed your membership.

If you haven't yet there's still time. The membership subscription for the year from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 is £18.

You should have a renewal invitation which explains how to renew online via the members portal on the new website -<https://u3asites.org.uk/mkhdu3a/home>.

You'll need to confirm your identity to get to the renewal screen. The details you input are matched with the information held on the Beacon system and if there are any differences you won't be able to proceed. Please note that the fields are case sensitive.

An example is shown below.

Member number	1212
Forename	Elizabeth (she's known as Liz but when she joined she used her full name of Elizabeth)
Surname	Doe
Postcode	B13 1AA (not b13 1aa)
Email	<a href="mailto:liz.doe@email.com">liz.doe@email.com</a>

Once you've got over the hurdle of confirming your identity, you'll be taken to the payment screen. We use PayPal to process payments but you don't have to have a PayPal account, click on the link and you'll be given the option to pay by credit or debit card.

If you haven't received your renewal invitation or are having problems renewing online contact me. If you don't want to pay online then you can send a cheque to Faith Walsh, Membership Secretary, my address is on your renewal invitation or bring your cheque to the next monthly meeting. The dates, timing and venue of our monthly meetings are in the newsletter.

### A new minutes-taker needed

Your Executive Committee continues to seek a new minutes-taker for 2023. This would involve attending each monthly meeting, held on the final Tuesday of the month at 14.00, and typing up the minutes. If anyone is interested, even only for a trial period, please email Ray Tier, our chair.



## Gift Aid

Thank you to all who were able to sign up for Gift Aid. We know not all can, but those who are able to help us all. I will also repeat here that if you cannot sign up for Gift Aid it does not affect your membership in any way, you are still very welcome and we hope you enjoy the activities.

Quite a lot more consented to Gift Aid at renewal, so now about 60% of our members have done so – this is about the level we expected. The claim was submitted in early April, which was not just for 2022 – 2023, but for the previous 3 years too. So far we have received payments for 3 of the years, and these come to a little over £2,600: we expect that when we receive the last payment it will take us to around £3,100. This has been of enormous benefit to us, and, while budgeting for next year is a long way off, we hope that we will be able to keep any increase in subscriptions at a low level with this money in our back pocket!

## New Secretary Opportunity

[A message from Ken Fisher](#)

I really hope that one of our members with business experience will offer to take on my role as Secretary of our u3a. The task is not particularly onerous. I intend to remain a member of the Executive Committee, and be able to give guidance to the new Secretary when needed. I have listed below the principal tasks I carry out each year:

- Keeping a file with copies of the Executive Committee minutes and other relevant documents that can be passed on to subsequent Secretaries.
- Making annual returns to the u3a Trust and the Charities Commission. These are fairly straightforward, online tasks.
- Organising the Annual General Meeting and any other Special Meetings including receiving nominations for Executive Committee membership.
- Liaising with the u3a Trust regarding insurances and general communications.
- Checking that our Policies and Procedures are up-to-date.
- Advising the Executive Committee on constitutional matters.
- Attending the monthly meetings of the Executive Committee.

## Scam Watch

### WhatsApp scam

If you receive an unsigned text message something like:

Hello Dad, this is my new number. My old mobile no longer works. Can you send this number a message on Whatsapp! New number: +44 7706 09098765

It is almost certainly a scam. You can report it by emailing a copy to Action Fraud at [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk)

### Bank refunds scam

Fraudsters are using a range of social media platforms to contact people with offers of non-existent bank refunds. In many cases, the fraudster shares a fake screenshot showing amounts ranging from £1,289 to £1,855 being deposited into an account. This is intended to encourage the recipient to share their bank details and claim a refund. In reality, no refund exists, and the scammer will use your financial information to steal money.

## Our Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be at the Shires on Wake Green Road at 2.00 pm on Wednesday, 14th of June. The Agenda will be issued by Beacon email or with the posted copy of the June Newsletter. Nominations for the new Executive Committee should be sent to our Secretary at Ken Fisher's email. A nomination should to be signed by a Proposer and Secunder both of whom need to be Members of our Moseley, Kings Heath and District u3a and not family or existing Executive Committee members. Alternatively, paper copies of a nomination may be handed to an Executive Committee member at our May Monthly Meeting.

As Ken Fisher needs to stand down after serving the constitutional maximum of three years in his Officer role, we urgently need a new Secretary.

## Contact information

Please ensure that emails sent to the addresses below include 'u3a' in the subject box.

### Interest Group enquiries

Anne James

Groups email

### Membership enquiries

Faith Walsh

Membership email

### Accounts enquiries

Carey Baff

Accounts email

### Newsletter

Ken Fisher

Communications email

### General enquires

Ray Tier

Enquiries email

### Social events

Janet Burgess

Events email

## Your Executive Committee

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Business & Communications Secretary
- Treasurer
- Interest Group Co-ordinator
- Membership Secretary
- Social Events Secretary
- Co-opted member

Ray Tier  
Cormac Quigley  
Ken Fisher  
Carey Baff  
Anne James  
Faith Walsh  
Janet Burgess  
Heather Lawrence