



Registered Charity 1159091

N.W. Website:

[https://u3asites.org.uk/north west](https://u3asites.org.uk/north%20west)

**N. W Region of u3as**

**October 2023**



Hodder's Bridge, Clitheroe

(photo by Tony Cheetham,  
Preston u3a.)

## Message from the Chair



**Our next workshop, 'Your Best Ever AGM' is now booked for November 6<sup>th</sup> in Liverpool and the details are on the NW website.** You don't have to be a committee member to attend. It's a light-hearted look at what can go wrong if you don't plan carefully with opportunities for discussion and sharing experience.

The committee would like to create a **STAR** group – **Short Tasks As Required** – to assist with some of our planning. It might be to help with meeting and greeting people or providing refreshments at one of our events. Or perhaps taking part in planning an activity. We'd love to have your suggestions.

I've had a rather mad idea about holding an all day music event next spring. This is still full of 'if, but, maybe' but the idea would be to have several musical activities taking part during the day with a chance to do short performances to each other at the end. I'd like to find some people who organise music groups in their own u3a so if you'd like to be involved please let me know.

Meanwhile here's a date for your diary. Our 2024 AGM is provisionally booked for July 2<sup>nd</sup> and we are hoping to have a performance by 'Fool's Gold'. The informal discussion groups this year were very successful so we would hope to plan the same structure next year.

Networking has taken a back seat during the pandemic but it's time to get our networks together again. These provide

opportunities to share good practice, discuss problems and successes, plan activities and offer suggestions for keeping our u3a movement vibrant. Please consider getting involved in bringing your u3a family together.

Best wishes to all.

Gill Russell. Please contact me on [u3anwrchair@gmail.com](mailto:u3anwrchair@gmail.com)

## Introducing our NW PR Advisor,

### Kelvin Rushworth



### Raising the profile of u3as in North West England

I am the newly appointed Public Relations Adviser for our region. Previously, I was the PRA for North East England, the first to be appointed in the UK!

Anyhow, together with u3as and u3a Networks in the region I want good news about our wonderful organisation to be read, heard and seen in every local media outlet across the North West.

Please let me know the name and email address of anyone in your u3a or Network who has a publicity role (either dedicated or part of a wider responsibility).

As far as I can, each month, I will be producing a PRA Mailing with ideas and resources to help you publicise your activities. If you have any publicity-related queries, feel free to contact me. If I do not know the answer, one of my PRA colleagues across the UK is sure to!

Kelvin Rushworth  
([kelvinregnat@outlook.com](mailto:kelvinregnat@outlook.com))

### **News from the groups**

It's always good to get news about your activities. Thank you to those groups who have been in touch.

Here are just a few which we have received recently. Please keep them coming, especially anything from u3a Week.

#### **Recorder event February 2024**

**Fiona Tucker from Formby u3a is organising a workshop for recorder players of intermediate or above ability on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at the Quaker Meeting House in Liverpool.**

Provisional details are on the NW website events page and updates will be posted there as soon as information about cost and booking is available.

#### **Southport u3a**

More than 500 u3a members from around the UK took advantage of discounted tickets to visit the Southport Flower Show, where Southport u3a had a stand. A large gazebo was loaned by British Iron Works in return for members collecting used spectacles to create an enormous dragonfly sculpture to generate awareness of the importance of insects for the environment. With flowers and furniture, they created such a magnificent centrepiece they were awarded a silver medal.



Thirty two Southport members volunteered to help in the Celebrity Kitchen

and their choir and ukulele groups performed on the main stage.

#### **Davyhulme u3a**

Inspired by conversations we'd had at the NW conference and AGM in Liverpool we organised a display to promote our u3a at our local Carnival on September 2<sup>nd</sup>. we were pleased by the response and believe we have encouraged the recruitment of new members.



#### **Leigh and District**

Leigh and District u3a held an open day on August 18<sup>th</sup>. Around 150 people attended, including members and potential new members. Most of the group facilitators were able to attend along with entertainment being provided by the ukulele and line-dancing groups. These included five new groups – Cycling, Coffee & Chat, Italian Culture, Singing for Fun and Dickens Social History. It was a wonderful afternoon showing the best of our u3a.



### **Mawdesley Villages u3a**

Every Wednesday morning, this group holds a 'Community Coffee Morning' which they say is the backbone of their u3a. It gives all the members chance to get together over a coffee, meet new friends or consolidate friendships and sign up for events or interest groups. It also provides an opportunity to welcome new or potential new members as well as a 'Tea and Chat' table where there is always a friendly face to welcome people. This event depends entirely on volunteers.

A recent meeting became a Macmillan Coffee Morning which raised a total of £539.71 to support this excellent organisation.

### **How often does your u3a provide an opportunity like this?**

### **Skiddaw u3a**

Keen on exploring the Lake District by public transport, the Skiddaw u3a walkers travelled by bus to Dockray. From there they squelched their way across the lower section of Watermillock Common before following the Brown Hills terrace path steadily ascending towards Glencoyne Brow. Soon they were high enough to enjoy fantastic views of Ullswater and the surrounding fells. Eventually, after a rather soggy ascent, they reached the top of Birkett Fell, a satellite of the Neighbouring Hart Side where they were offered a splendid view of the Far Eastern Fells. One more easy ascent and the walkers found themselves on the summit of White Stones, where they were struck by the sight of the twin pyramids of Catstycam and Helvellyn Lower Man. Next came the passage to Sticks Pass then, descending to

Stanah along a well-trodden bridleway the walkers kept stopping to admire the awe-inspiring skyline to the west and soon they could see Thirlmere in the valley below. A steadily steepening track brought the walkers to the edge of the dramatic ravine of Stanah Gill whose tumbling waterfalls accompanied them right to the bottom where the roaring and foaming Sty Beck Falls provided a fitting finale to this splendid hike.

The windswept Roamers on the summit of Birkett Fell.



**Do you have any interesting walks to share? Take a look at the subject advisers page for walkers on the national website, where you can also share information about walking exchanges.**

### **Lancaster & Morecambe u3a** **Japanese Study Day 30 September 2023**

Months of planning finally came to fruition at the end of September when L&M u3a held their Japanese Study Day. The idea arose during a Crime Book Group meeting when we were discussing a book written by one of our members; it was set in Japan where she had lived for many years. What she was telling us was so interesting, it suddenly seemed obvious what our next Study Day should be. Offers of help and ideas poured in from our members and we quickly had the main



talks organised and lots of displays and demonstrations planned. It was a superb example of “By the members, for the members” as most of the contributors had never even been to Japan yet showed great enthusiasm in researching new and stimulating topics.

Undeterred by a train strike and the weather, the event was extremely well attended and was a great success.

Our Art groups mounted a wonderful display of work inspired by Japan; we learnt about and wrote Haiku; Japanese lettering and made origami boxes. We had a shiatsu demonstration; a video about a pottery village and listened to Japanese folk tales. In addition, we had talks on Japanese houses, gardens, railways; films; tsunamis; origin myths; literature and geisha. One of the highlights was a discussion with two members who had lived in Japan for many years – Japanese green tea and nibbles provided; as well as all the beautiful examples of memorabilia which people brought in.

Suggestions for at least two new groups have arisen because of the day; a writing workshop and an Aspects of Japan Interest Group.

Many, many thanks to all the members who supported the event and helped to make this such a memorable day.

Photograph courtesy of Dave Green



### **Lytham St. Annes u3a**

Congratulations to Lytham St Annes u3a, which was short-listed for an award in the 'Fylde Active Community Awards. This recognises people, clubs and organisations that go above and beyond in sport and activity in the community. Lytham St. Annes received a Highly Recommended Certificate for the work they do in the u3a.



### **Lymm and Thelwall u3a**

A u3a monthly meeting with a difference. To tie in with the national organisation's Alfresco in Autumn theme the committee organised a picnic after the meeting. Following a dodgy week meteorologically we were relieved to wake up to sunshine which stuck around through Anna Alexander's informative talk on 'Child Labour in Warrington'. Meeting over, thirty eight of us arranged ourselves on the grass outside and enjoyed warm sunshine, lunch and the company of good friends.

### **Vikings, Civil War, Morris Men and more**

Where can you visit a Viking Village, decide who to support in the Civil War - Cavillers or Roundheads. What did farmers grow, join a band of Morris Men. promote u3a and so much more? Lymm and Thelwall took part in 'Thelwall 1100' – a celebration of 1100 years since the founding of a 'cyty' (original spelling) called Thelwall, by the Anglo Saxon King, Edward the Elder.

Events took part throughout September, including investigation of the history of their village by children at junior school, heritage crafts, walks, pebble painting, Wellbeing weekend and coffee mornings cumulated in a full day around the Parish Hall and Sunday's Thanksgiving service at All Saints Church. It was a wonderful day to share the activities of Lymm & Thelwall u3a.



**Lymm & Thelwall Members learning how to Morris Dance.**

### **Bramhall u3a**

For 13 years the Mapping Bramhall U3A Group has researched Bramhall's past, present and future to create a unique archive.

Val Murray, the group's leader said, "We have walked, searched the records, talked to people, revisited our own memories, sat and observed . . . had cups of tea . . . to create this original research. A huge amount of work over the last year has been put in by the group and it's now ready for everyone to enjoy."

No stone was left unturned by the U3A group members. This archive reflects the diverse interests of the group, with a range of fascinating and unusual topics. Manhole covers, gravestones, local heroes and villains, tree roots in Happy

Valley, abandoned gateposts, which flowers grow in the car parks and the shenanigans of the old Bramhall Festival - it's all recorded, photographed and written about here.

On April 26th the archive was donated to the Stockport Heritage Library for all to enjoy. But it won't be leaving Bramhall entirely. Work is in progress to put a digitised copy on the u3a website.

Bramhall u3a brings people together to continue their interests in a friendly, informal environment, drawing on their knowledge and experience to learn from each other. This achievement really reflects the wonderful work done by our u3a members and we are so proud of everyone who contributed to this. It will form an important part of Bramhall's history for many years to come.

Group Project on local Post boxes



Centre Point, Bramhall Lane South



Post Office, Maple Road



Railway Bridge, Bramhall Lane South



Robins Lane / Bramhall Lane South

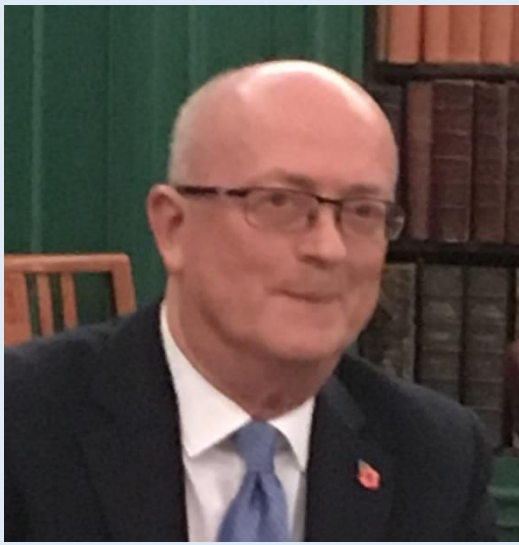


Ladythorn Road / Ladythorn Crescent



Shops, Dairyground Road

**Last but by no means least:**



**I'm sure I speak for all the members of the North West region when I say a big 'Thank you' to Neil for all his hard work and support in his role as NW Trustee.**

**Gill**

**Neil Stevenson, Trustee for the NW Region of u3as.**

My three years as your regional trustee come to an end at the Trust AGM on 18<sup>th</sup> October. Since 2020, it has been a challenging period for all of us. I am pleased that so many of our u3as have recovered from the Covid and lockdown period and are flourishing again. I am delighted that we have a new u3a: Upper Eden, based in Kirkby Stephen. In the past eighteen months, it has been my privilege and pleasure to be able to visit many of our u3as. As well as being your trustee and board member of the Third Age Trust, I am also a director of the Third Age Trust Trading Limited. I will be stepping down from both of these roles as well as the eight national committees and working parties that I am also involved with. This includes chairing the Merchandise Committee and leading the Beacon communications team. I will continue to be the national subject advisor for Egyptology and have agreed to continue on the 'Fit For The Future' Steering Committee. So, I will not disappear completely. Thank you to all of you who have helped and supported me for the past three years. Best wishes for the future  
Neil