

System and District



# Vitality!

Jan

2019

Official newsletter of the System and District University of the Third Age

Dear Member

## U3A New Year Greetings

May I take this opportunity to wish every one of you and your families a healthy and happy New Year. Let's move into 2019 with renewed vitality!

Personally, with batteries re-charged, after a holiday in the sun, I look forward to being involved in another year of active development for the U3A.

A review of the past year brought many happy memories, many of them inevitably linked to U3A activities. Our success in being awarded charitable status at the first attempt ranks very highly, as does our success in launching a programme of inter-U3A challenges at Regional level through the Pub Quiz.

In the months ahead, we will continue to strive to improve our administrative effectiveness. Fortunately, in Peter Thornber, we have found an excellent Project Manager to lead us through the implementation of the nationally recommended BEACON system. This will take time and a deal of effort on the part of Executive Committee Members to learn new skills and successfully adapt to the changes which will be required.

Under the terms of our Constitution, I will stand down from the post of Chairman after our AGM in June, after three very busy - at times challenging - years in the post. However, should it be called upon, my continued full support and encouragement can be relied upon by my successor.

Let's look forward together to another great year, with the U3A providing a deal of pleasure and a sense of personal fulfilment, building on the sound foundations that, together, we have established.

*COLIN GRIMES, Chairman*

# News from December 2018

## Committee News

### GENERAL MEETING ATTENDANCE RECORDING

Your Executive Committee have decided to take appropriate steps to minimise inconvenience to Members attending General Meetings. As an organisation hosting the meeting, we have three obligations.

**First**, we need to ensure that everyone in attendance is a registered Member of U3A - or is a potential member attending a “taster” session.

**Second**, Fire regulations require us to be in a position to report an accurate number of attendees in case of an emergency.

**Third**, Fire regulations also oblige us not to exceed the maximum permitted number for which the venue is registered. (*180 in the case of the Malthouse Suite, our current venue.*)

Until now, we have tried to register everyone as they enter, but have never been satisfied with the inconvenience this system causes at “peak” arrival times and we have been aware that a significant number of attendees are “missed” from the list for one reason or another. In short, we have expended a lot of effort and caused a deal of inconvenience in order to produce a not particularly accurate register! With effect from the February meeting, therefore, all Members will be asked simply to produce and show their membership card to be admitted. If, for some reason, you do not have your current membership card, quoting your membership number, please ask at the membership desk in the hall or contact Membership Secretary Norma Grimes (0116 2608412 or [u3abiz@btinternet.com](mailto:u3abiz@btinternet.com)) for a replacement in order to avoid misunderstandings and minimise delay at future meetings.

From February, once everyone is seated, at the start of the programme, members of the Executive Committee will discreetly carry out a head count and provide the licensed owners of the property with an accurate attendance number. Should anyone leave the meeting early, their departure will be quietly noted to ensure that we are always fully aware of the accurate number in the hall, just in case an emergency should occur.

We hope, in this way to improve your experience and cause minimal interference with your enjoyment of the event.

In the (*hopefully unlikely*) event of an emergency, all Members should proceed to one of the two designated Assembly Points (*in the rear car park or on the village green*), clearly marked by a green poster, where a head count will be conducted and compared to the registered attendance. Full details of emergency evacuation procedures will be provided at the start of each meeting.

We trust that we can rely upon each of you for your full co-operation in this important matter.

*Colin Grimes*, Chairman

## December Monthly Meeting

### “FIRE SAFETY WITH A SMILE

A recent talk at Syston U3A was a red hot topic: it sparked our imaginations, fuelled our curiosity, and kindled our interest. Enough of this nonsense. Oh go on then, let's have a bit more. Fire safety doesn't have to be dull.

Q: What do you do if your dinner's in the oven and it catches fire? A: Open a tin of beans.

Q: What should I do if my house has a thatched roof? A: Move house.

Q: What should I do if my tv catches fire? A: Listen to the radio.

That's not the sort of fire safety advice you'd expect on a normal day, but when the title of the talk is *“Fire Safety With A Smile”* - and a bit of humour is what's promised - it's just what we got.

Retired fireman Bill shared some of his past exploits and experiences – some heart warming, some humorous. Like when he went to a house fire to rescue Joey, thinking Joey was a real person. Joey turned out to be the budgie.

Joking apart, fire safety is a serious business and Bill's advice was sound. Most fires can be prevented by taking sensible precautions: identify and be aware of the potential fire risks in your home; know what to do to reduce or prevent these risks; have a plan to escape in case a fire does break out, and make sure you have smoke alarms that work.

Some common things we get wrong include: either throwing a wet towel over a burning chip pan - wring it out first, better still use a fire blanket or doing the “Man Thing” and carrying the pan outside – you might just make it worse and risk burning yourself.

Fit smoke alarms and close the doors in the house when you go out to reduce the chance of any fire spreading. Don't store combustible materials under the stairs, if you're upstairs and there's a fire you won't be able to get out. If you want to test your smoke alarm leave the toast in the toaster a bit longer. (That might have been another of Bill's jokes, but we'll never know).

Did you know that 52% of domestic fires are caused by cooking? Whose, he wouldn't say, but let's move on. And 24% are caused by electrical faults. Only 6% of fires are caused by smokers, but there are more deaths from this cause than any other.

Lastly, if you're in a house fire stay close to the ground as smoke rises, leave the house as quickly as you can, close doors behind you, and phone 999. If you have an electrical fire switch the power off, if you can do so safely.

If you'd like more information on this (without the jokes) most Fire and Rescue Services offer what's called a “Safe and Well” visit, some call them “Home Fire Risk Assessments” or “Home Fire Safety Checks”. Or for more information go to [www.leicestershire-fire.gov.uk/your-safety/at-home](http://www.leicestershire-fire.gov.uk/your-safety/at-home)

*Brian King*

## News from the Groups

### Creative Writing Group

I can now confirm that the group will be meeting on the 4th Wednesday of each month (instead of the 4th Thursday). Our sessions will also move to the Syston Library from 2.00-3.30pm. The library is on "smart access" on Wednesdays, so anyone wishing to attend will need a library card which is set for this.

Joining the library is straightforward and can be done in person or online. "Smart access" on your card requires a 10 min session with a member of staff, although if you already have such access set up with a different Leicestershire library that is enough.

Our optional theme for a piece this month is "new beginnings". Group members are however free to bring along any piece to share. Anyone interested in joining the group would be most welcome. If you feel you would like more information please do contact me via the website or on 0116 2609012.

*Julie Johnson*

### **Discussion Group - Report for the year 2018**

Numbers have increased during the year, with equal numbers of men and women, and the discussions have varied from the serious, to the very humorous, with all members encouraged to share their views on the various topics.

The major subjects discussed in 2018 were BREXIT and Operation Fear, the state of various EU Countries; the statements made by the Governor of the Bank of England; Teresa May; Donald Trump; the Police; the Speaker of the House of Commons and the antics of various MP's; Overseas Aid; the National Health Service; Global Warming; Charities and the sex scandals; the burka; and the many examples of bias by the BBC.

The more light hearted subjects, included Public Toilets in Syston; snow in the Sahara Desert; camembert cheese made from cashew nuts; the \$10,000 toilet seat; the royal weddings; some late night TV shows; the 2 refrigerators which cost \$24m (for Air Force One); the world shortage of octopus legs; and the Chinese School for training obedient wives.

The Group meets at the Hub, on High Street, Syston at 2pm on the third Wednesday of each month, the next meeting being on 16 January 2019, and all are welcome. If you would like more details, please contact Harold Betts on 0116 260 8671

### **Syston Happy Ukulele Band**

Just before Christmas we held our first birthday party as the U3A Syston Happy Ukulele Band started just over 12 months ago. Presently we have 49 members. The overwhelming majority had never played any musical instruments before they joined the Band.



The Band meets every Friday at The Brookside Club, next to the Brookside Café, near the blue bridge, otherwise known as the Millennium Bridge, Syston, at 1.45pm to commence at 2pm and finish at 3.30.

Over the last year we have performed at numerous local venues, the most recent being the Friendship Club at Queniborough Village Hall on 19<sup>th</sup> December. The audience were fantastic and heartily joined in the singing. Several of them said that they didn't know what to expect, however, they were pleasantly surprised at how good the entertainment was and were really sorry that the show had to end.

Len, or Dave, offer personal one to one tuition in a member's home or elsewhere to enable brand new members to catch up.

If you would like to have an enjoyable weekly sing-along and lots of laughs why not pop in on a Friday afternoon. Any existing Syston U3A member is more than welcome to attend before they purchase a ukulele, as well as those that are considering becoming U3A members. No prior musical knowledge or prior musical ability whatsoever is required due to the innovative teaching methods used.


**Len Abraham and Dave Houseman**

## Workshops

Two successful workshops ran with almost 20 people on both at the Old School , in Syston on Wednesday December 5 th 2018.

### Glass fusing.

At the morning workshop we had a tutor Ali Groschl and her daughter from Smartsy who instructed us in the art of making

fused glass  Christmas trees. We all were proud of our results and the completed masterpieces were handed back to the participants at the December meeting after they had been in the kiln to be fired.



### Christmas wreath making session

We all arrived for the afternoon with wreath making bases and a whole host of materials , glass baubles, ribbons , fresh and artificial foliage which we had collected over the previous couple of weeks and as we sat and chatted and munched our mince pies the wreaths took shape and the afternoon absolutely wizzed by.



At the end of it we were able to adorn our front doors at home with unique wreaths and feel as pleased as punch each time we arrived home.



Our thanks go to Janet Downes and Sheila Driver for their help with the afternoon workshop session.

*Liz Thornber*

# COMING UP

## January Monthly Meeting

This month's topic is "Community Archaeology in Leicestershire" presented by Peter Liddle. Refreshments are available from 10.00 at only 50p, the meeting starts at 10.30a.m  
9<sup>th</sup> January, Syston Conservative Club.

## Groups

### Line Dancing

#### ***DANCE THOSE CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR EXCESSES AWAY***

Come and join our happy band of line dancers

We meet each Monday from 2.00 till 3.30p.m at the Methodist Hall High Street Syston

Our first session for 2019 will be 14 January

As there is a new boiler being installed in the Church and Hall there will not be any heating for a couple of weeks So put on some layers in case a bit chilly to start with. You will soon warm up when you start dancing

Looking forward to seeing you all for a fun afternoon

*Chris Ringrose*

### Mah Jong

We have moved our venue to Syston Community Centre, still at 10.00 a.m. on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month. Everyone is welcome.

Margaret King

### January Workshop

The first workshop of the new year is 'dry felting ' at Rearsby Village Hall on Tuesday January 22<sup>nd</sup> 10.00 - 1.00pm Please see me at the monthly meeting next week if you are interested. [lizthornber@gmail.com](mailto:lizthornber@gmail.com)  
01162675362

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### West Leicestershire U3A

West Leicestershire U3A has a small music group and has been meeting since the spring in it's current form. It consists of 4 members, two guitarists, a drummer and a keyboard player. They would clearly like more members and would like to extend an invitation to members of other U3As should they be interested.

They play popular songs, mostly from the '60s and '70s, but are open to any suggestions. They are looking for other players of instruments particularly bass guitar and singers but would also welcome hearing from anyone who plays an instrument that could be part of a popular song arrangement.

Whilst not beginners they class themselves as intermediate/improving level.

They currently meet monthly in Huncote but are open to other venues.

Anyone interested should Email Peter Benson at [us2@mynafon.plus.com](mailto:us2@mynafon.plus.com)

## From The Editor

I hope you are looking forward to restarting your activities in January and perhaps starting some new ones. If you enjoyed the entertainment at the Social why not join in the groups. Line dancing, singing and the Ukulele band would all welcome you.

Margaret

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A poem to celebrate a highlight:

### ***Alfie's Ghost and Roscoe's Snotter***

Way before Christmas before we all started to think about carols and mince pies, a group of U3A gamblers took an arthritic bronchitic charabanc to Nottingham dog track. We had a smashing night out, courtesy of Ann Winter - thanks Ann – and what follows leaked out of my laptop a few days later.

We went to the dogs, it rained cats and frogs, but to us it needn't have mattered

We were tucked up inside, all cosy and dried, so that way we didn't get splattered

The bus, well, it spluttered and some of us muttered "We'll be lucky to get there tonight"

It strolled through the traffic, but we'd no need to panic as the dog track came slowly in sight.

We didn't frown as the rain piddled down we were inside, all smiles, you see

A three course nosh, nearly quite posh and it filled a big hole for our tea

Thirteen races, six dogs apiece, that's seventy eight dogs altogether

They all looked the same, except for their name, but they gave us all buckets of pleasure



Their colours and jackets helped us to tell, which pooch was the winner you see  
The races were o'er in a blink of an eye then we'd bet on another – what a spree!

Alfie's Ghost and Roscoes Snotter, their names were two of the oddest  
We bet on them both, they ran like a Sloth, their pedigree was what you'd call "modest".

Well, some dogs were nifty, by heck they could shifty around the track sprinting like hell  
Picking a winner were no problem for Baz but his secret he just wouldn't tell.

Five winners he had, and his missus was glad, she'd a share of the winnings she thought  
A new hat and new shoes, she just couldn't lose, but she'd more likely end up with nought.

And when we came out, of the bus there was nowt, vanished - cleared off, disappeared.  
"Abducted by aliens" somebody said, we'll have to walk home we all feared.

In the drizzle we gathered, and waited a while till a new bus came up – ship ahoy!  
The one that we came in was worn out with miles, they'd sent us a new one - deep joy!  
So the night finished off on an "upper" you see - we'd laughed, we'd cheered, we'd nattered  
Then we all set off going, all comfy and glowing, it was only a bus that was knackered.

*Brian King*

