

January



U3A Member and BBC The Archers' actress June Spencer (middle) with fellow members from her scrabble group. Read an exclusive interview with June in your next edition of Third Age Matters - out next month.

Welcome to a new year and a new decade, 2020.

There are many exciting programmes happening across the movement this year. The new look Third Age Matters, led by Editor Joanne Smith, the work towards U3A day, the Beacon upgrade programme, to name a few.

This newsletter highlights the many great things happening across the movement. Many of you have been expressing an interest in climate change and how you can

make a difference at local level in your U3A .

So many members and U3As make a positive impact, not only to each other but their wider communities. Happy New Year to you all.

With regards,
Sam Mauger
Chief Executive

In this issue...

Membership Survey

Advice on Fashion

Celebratory Quilts

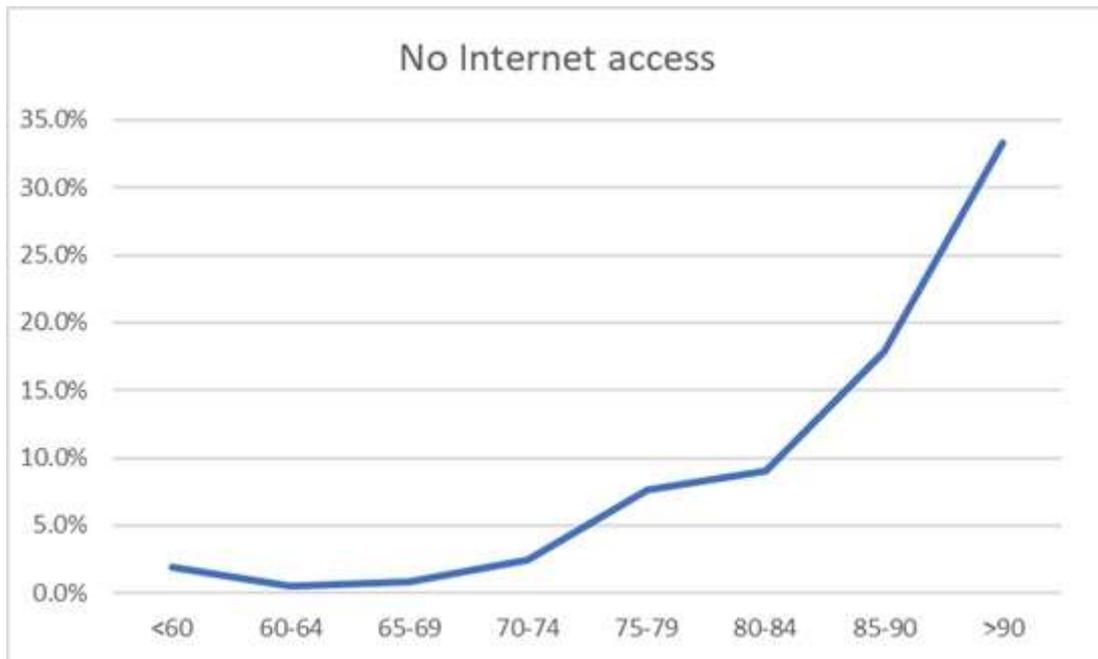
News from the Trust



We are more Connected

We now have the results of an in-depth membership survey which the Third Age Trust conducted ten years after a similar survey in 2009.

202 U3As were randomly selected throughout the UK to take part– a big thank you as we achieved a 77% response rate for which the Trust is very grateful.



While some of the data has not changed significantly in ten years – for example our gender balance seems not to have changed much: 74% female in 2001, 71% in 2009 and 70% in 2019.

However use of technology has really changed – we seem to be digitally literate and more connected, with 95% using the internet and 97% using email.

The survey means we have a great deal more data on our membership and this will be important in driving the focus of developing the movement in the coming months and years.

[Read The Survey](#)

U3A Day - Sign Up Form



Barnsley U3A are planning a U3A Walking Cricket Tournament for U3A Day

The number of U3As on our dedicated closed [Facebook page](#) for this landmark day is now above 200.

We need all those U3As taking part to register with us so we can keep track of all the wonderful events taking place showcasing what you do. Your cumulative information will also enable us to raise awareness at regional and national levels. [A sign up form](#) is now available (a mailing will be sent to all U3A committees in the coming days).

Do please keep checking the [U3A dedicated tab](#) on the national website as we will continue to update it in the coming weeks including advice and toolkit resources.

Financial Matters

A New Grant for U3A Day

This year the Trust has introduced a U3A Day grant of £100 to help U3As celebrate the movement on 3 June 2020. The application form and the policy and procedure can be found on the button below. The link to the forms will be up on the website soon.

[Application Form U3A Day Grant](#)

[Policy and Procedure for Grants](#)

Do I have to register for VAT?



Good question!

If during the course of any 12 months, your 'taxable supplies' exceed the VAT registration threshold, you are legally obliged to register for VAT.

The VAT registration threshold is set at £85,000 for the 2017-18 tax year (and will not change for two years from 1 April 2018). 'Taxable supplies' are anything that is subject to VAT. So, if your turnover of taxable supplies exceeds £85,000, or if you know that it will, you must register.

There are a couple of things for committees to remember here. First of all, the

threshold applies to turnover rather than profit – so many firms will be obliged to register very quickly. Furthermore, ‘taxable supplies’ includes any product or service that is liable for VAT, at any rate – including 0 per cent. It only excludes items that are VAT exempt. It is therefore important that you understand the different VAT rates, and their impact on your business.

I'm here to help so please email me if you have any questions about this or the grants procedure: kevin.traynor@u3a.org.uk

In Brief:

U3A membership subscriptions are treated as donations by HMRC so they and the associated Gift Aid are excluded.

Wherever possible, holidays and trips should be booked direct with the travel agent and so excluded from the U3A accounts.

Trips that are organised and paid for through the U3A may be treated separately and “taxed” under a VAT scheme called TOMS (Tour Operators Margin Scheme) where only the margin counts towards the £85,000 threshold.

U3A News



Downpours Don't Stop Stoke South

Despite torrential rain, [Stoke-On-Trent South U3A](#) has held a successful Open Day in Longton with the local MP, Lord Mayor and many members of the public visiting.

Business Secretary Fay Howell said, "Thanks to the enthusiasm shown by organisers, including group leaders and volunteers, the interesting and varied displays encouraged a number of people to join U3A on the day and others were quite keen to pick up membership forms and literature to take home".



An Enduring Partnership

Bolton U3A have reached a year landmark with their partnership with Bolton University.

Bolton U3A and the University of Bolton signed a Memorandum of Understanding underpinning a new working relationship committed to promoting opportunities for life-long learning in the town.

The year has included an exclusive visit arranged for U3A members to the School of Arts end-of-year Creative Arts Show and an illustrated talk to Bolton U3A's History and Local History groups.

And there's more to come including Bolton U3A's Digital Photography, Stitch & Craft and Art Creators will each contribute exhibits to the University's Worktown Festival.

We'd love to hear about your U3A and its connections to organisations in your area.



Cheshunt U3A's Jazz Band, now in its third year, consists of members from U3As across South East Hertfordshire. Some of its members joined U3A because they wanted to join the Jazz Band. See an article from one of its members coming soon on [Sources](#)

Thank You

Crewe And Nantwich Instrumental Folk group would like to thank Sarah Goodwin, the Group Leader and founder of the group who has recently had to relinquish the reins because she is leaving the area.

Bournemouth U3A line dancing group want to say a huge thank you to Olive Cooper who has hung up her dancing shoes after 22 years.

Do you have a group leader you would like to say thank you to? We'd love to [hear from you](#)

News from the Board of Trustees

Board Report - Ian McCannah, Chair

The new year brings with it the prospect of a number of key developments for the Trust and its members.

There will be a new membership system to replace the current Beacon one. U3As will have access to the latest technology to ease the admin burden on their Committee members. For those U3As not currently using Beacon now is a good time to look at what the new system offers.

June 3 will see the first U3A Day. Many U3As are planning events aimed at spreading the word about our unique movement to their wider community. Not surprisingly, given the depth of resources within U3A, the variety of events being planned are both impressive and imaginative. You can see more on the [national website](#)

Work is starting on ways that will refresh the U3A image. Before final decisions are made on changes to our imagery and publicity materials there will be consultation through member focus groups. More details on this important initiative can be found in a letter sent to all U3A Committees this month".

All the best,
Ian

[Read more on U3A Brand Refresh](#)

Subject Advice News



New Subject Adviser for Fashion

We are delighted to announce that **Ruth Lancashire** has become the first U3A subject adviser for Fashion.

Ruth has been fascinated with clothes, fashion and fabrics all her life. She said, I love beautiful fabrics, skilled designs and craftsmanship which I share with the other members of our Fashion Groups. I set up a group over six years ago with another member in Leigh Estuary U3A and we now have three groups!

Do you want to set up a Fashion group? Email Ruth at fashionsubjectadviser@gmail.com

Climate Change Subject Adviser

Frances Halliday is U3A Subject Adviser for Climate Change. She would love to hear from you and has a new email address. Contact her

on u3a.climatechange@gmail.com

You can see all updates from the National Subject Advisers
at <https://www.u3a.org.uk/resources/subjects>



Do you have a wild swimming group at your U3A? There's an article on Chris Rock, Vice-Chair of Pembury U3A, in the February edition of TAM. Tell us your wild swimming stories at eleanor.mair@u3a.org.uk

Education Events

National Events

Open for Booking

- [Close Encounters of the Animal Kind at The National Gallery](#)
- [U3A Explores Science at the RI](#)
- [Discovering Children's Literature at the British Library](#)

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/events/educational-events>

Summer Schools

National Summer Schools are set to be ready for booking in late February so look out for [details on the website](#). This year they take place:

Monday 3 August to Thursday 6 August 2020
Aston University, Birmingham, B4 7ET
Monday 7 September to Thursday 10 September 2020
Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, GL7 6JS

Regional



Thank you to Beeston U3A Table Tennis Group 2018

U3A Table Tennis contest

Building on the continued success of this U3A event supported by Table Tennis Wales – a date has been set for the team event next year - **Friday 16 October 2020**.

Event coordinator, Phillip Avery from Table Tennis Wales said, “We are very excited to have now introduced a separate singles event this year - to be held on the day before the team event - for those who may be interested in entering both competitions”.

More detail, regulations and closing date for event will soon be on the [Wales U3A Events Page](#)

[Sign Up to Table Tennis Competition](#)

U3A Hearth Tax Conference

This U3A Shared Learning Project with Roehampton University, has been looking at the historic Hearth Tax - a property tax from the 17th Century. The conference will take place at the Institute of Historical Research, University of London on 18 March 2020.

Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine featured the conference in its January issue.

To apply for a ticket for March 18 2020, [click here](#)



Conference - It's OK To Be Deaf

Bury U3A hosted a mini-conference for members affected by hearing loss.

Speakers talked about hearing aids and tactics people can use to boost their communicative skills, such as lip reading. Forty one members attended.

See Barbara's story on setting up a sign language group at the end of the newsletter.

Sources



Congleton U3A Steam Punk group

Our blog - [Sources Online](#) - has some great new stories for the New Year! These include Congleton Steam Punk group (above), the Knicky Knack Knitters, Shared Learning Projects and much much more

Building Partnerships

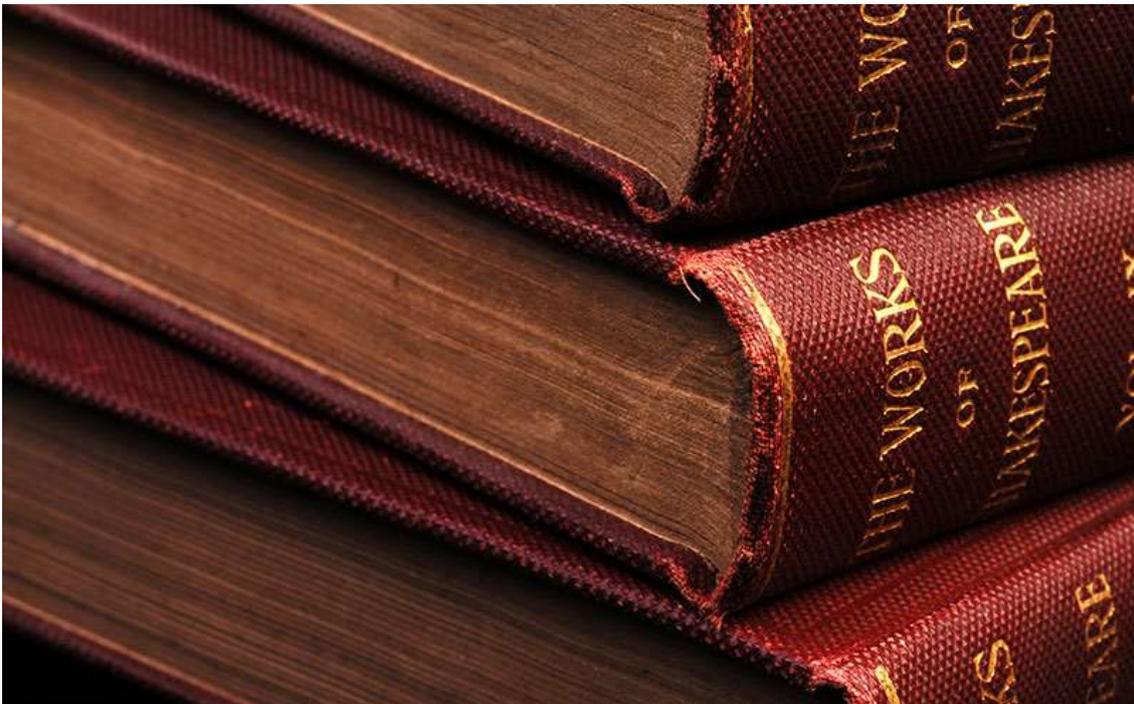
Pitman Project Update

U3A members have help move forward a potential Shared Project with the [Guardian Foundation charity](#). The project is to transcribe a collection of notebooks from Clyde Sanger, The Guardian's first Africa correspondent between 1960 and 1965.

National Shared Learning Project coordinator [Jennifer Simpson](#) said, "The project is currently in a scoping phase and we are very grateful to Barbara, Dot, Lynn, Margaret and Vida, some of the more than 100 U3A members who volunteered to help with this potential project.

They met with Emma and Philippa at the Guardian Offices to look at some of the writing and see how difficult this project would be.

Please bear with us and we will, of course, keep you updated. Your enthusiasm and support will hopefully help make it happen".



Leather in Shakespeare

[Northampton U3A](#) collaborated with the [National Leather Collection](#) for an exhibition about Leather in Shakespeare. The exhibition sought to explain the meaning behind Shakespeare's references to leather with contemporary examples. Members from the Leathercraft and Shakespeare groups helped to curate and research the items in the exhibition.

There was also a virtual tour of the exhibition made available online for those who could not come along.

International News



Ashbourne and District U3A went on an exchange visit to Reinheim, Germany visiting places such as a vineyard at Groß-Umstadt.

Connecting with our Colleagues Abroad

During her visit to Australia over Christmas to visit family, Auriol Ainley, chairman of the International Committee, visited Rhonda Weston at her home in Toowoomba, Queensland.

Rhonda is the president of Toowoomba U3A, which is celebrating its 30th birthday this year.

Auriol said, “This was a most enjoyable afternoon tea and cake in the amazing heat of the Australian summer, although dogged by smoke from the dreadful fires raging in the province. All sorts of U3A topics were discussed and they presented me with a wonderful copy of their 130 page book celebrating their birthday, entitled Our Tree of Knowledge!

Queensland has 33 U3As with 22,000 members – Toowoomba has 2150 members and 190 classes/activities each week. It is wonderful to be able to strike up new friendships so far across the world through this incredible organisation we are all part of – always so much to exchange and enjoy.”

If any other members visit family and friends abroad at their U3As, do please let the [International Committee](#) know so we can spread the message even further afield.

U3A in Media

In an article about the best places to retire in The Times, U3A members were featured talked about their U3A and how it contributes to making these locations a great place to live.



U3A Member Awarded MBE

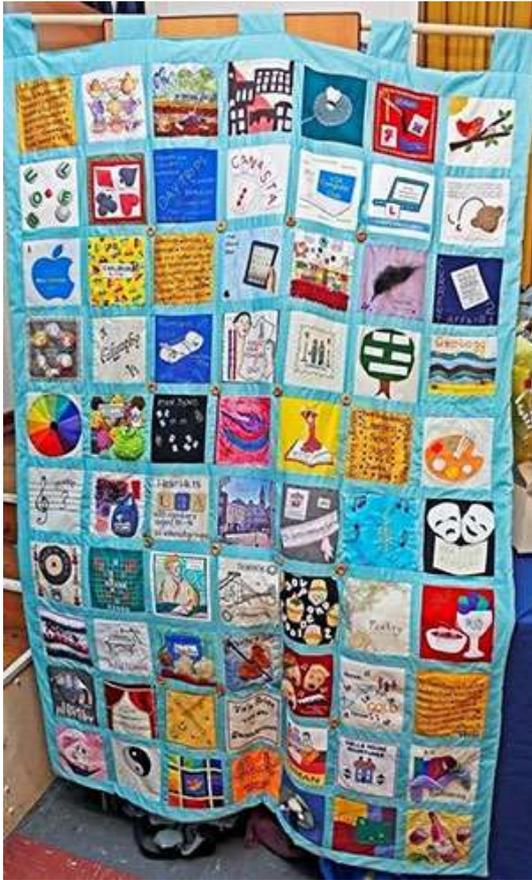
U3A member, John Hajdu, was awarded an MBE for his services to Holocaust education. John is a survivor of the Holocaust in Hungary and works with the Holocaust Education Trust to talk to schools about his experiences with the Holocaust.

He appeared on Sky News, talking about the MBE, his experiences with the Holocaust and the importance of continuing to share these stories.

An interview with John is going to be in the next edition of Third Age Matters, coming out in February.

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/about/news-archive/514-u3a-member-awarded-mbe>

U3A Celebrations



Celebratory Quilts

West Wilts U3A created this quilt (left) for their 25th anniversary. It was made by members, shows the range of interest groups available and is now kept at local Dorothy House.

Cockermouth U3A Quilting and Patchwork group gifted a wall hanging to the Kirkgate Arts Centre depicting various aspects of life in and around Cockermouth (below left).

Chiltern U3A's 20th anniversary was marked with a presentation of a wall hanging made by their Patchwork and Quilting group (below right).



In Focus



Barbara Walker, Group Convenor of Stone U3A Sign Language Group

"I have a genetic hearing loss and wear hearing aids. I grew up having to use clear speech for members of my family, but sign language was not used. In my early 40s, I learnt and went on to teach lip-reading. I then enrolled for a sign language course, deciding it would be useful to be able to communicate with deaf people who sign. I gained stage 1 in British Sign Language.

Three years ago, two U3A members advertised in our newsletter for a group leader for a sign language group – as they were hoping to communicate with a local woman who is deaf. I offered to become group leader, hoping my basic knowledge was still somewhere at the back of my mind.

Surprisingly, my Sign Language group here in Stone is still in practice. We now have 14 enthusiastic members, who meet each week for 1 hour.

We often read how retired people are encouraged to learn a new language. Sign language can be a new pastime in helping to retain and sharpen our

memory. It can also provide the opportunity of gaining new friendships and hopefully, with some knowledge of signing, find the courage in communicating with a deaf person who signs.

Learning to sign key words could be useful for people with some degree of hearing loss, when used by members of their family, partners or friends.

My knowledge of teaching lip reading has been very beneficial in helping me to structure lessons and I have also passed on the skills of lip reading.

Deaf people use this skill when signing, along with recognition of facial expressions, gestures and body language. It is important to practice all these skills when learning to sign".





