

Subject: Your u3a National Newsletter - January 🐰
From: Sam Mauger at u3a Office <info@u3a.org.uk>
Date: 30/01/2023, 13:16
To: Derek <web_master@buckinghamu3a.org.uk>



Click [here](#) to open the newsletter in your browser.



The Isle of Skye u3a Step-it-up walking group at Sligachan, against the backdrop of the Cuillin Mountains.

January

Dear Derek,

This week I took part in the first strategy day for staff, Trustees and other members who lead our committees. **This was a chance for us all to share**

progress, ideas and learn from each other. You can see some of the interesting stories which came from our Trustees in the TAM magazine throughout the year.

Thank you so much to all of you who give your time to support the movement as a committee member in your u3a. Your energy, commitment and support means we have such a thriving movement.

We would urge you to please consider putting your name forward for elections to one of the vacant regional Trustee roles - the details on how you can learn more about what is involved can be found below.

The u3a movement has certainly started 2023 as it means to go on with many examples of what makes u3a so special with your energy, creativity and skill sharing. The photos sent in from members this month are inspiring. Please do keep joining in the national learning initiatives and keep sharing your stories and photos - you can send them to communications@u3a.org.uk

I am looking forward to meeting and speaking with many of you throughout the year - the next of my Conversations With series continues next month. **There will be an opportunity to meet and talk to members of the Trust throughout 2023** so please see the details below and book your place - it will be wonderful to see you there.

One last request before I finish is for you all to **please watch our video from the u3a across Scotland poetry group, who kindly offered to be this month's Spotlight On at the end of the newsletter.**

With very best wishes

Sam Mauger
CEO of the Third Age Trust

In this issue...

A conversation about Digital Strategy
A Celebrity Visitor at High Wycombe & District u3a's Tree Planting

Spotlight On: u3a Online Across Scotland poetry group

Bitesize Newsletter

Download the Bitesize Newsletter

News from The Trust



Your Learning Goals for 2023

In our newsletter express last year, we asked what you hoped to learn in 2023 and got lots of responses.

As always, your responses demonstrated the incredible breadth of interests and experiences within u3a and we've passed your ideas onto our learning team. Some of you want to learn how to repair electronics whilst others want to learn woodwork, pre-slavery history in Africa, the geology of North East Scotland, how to draw, Spanish or Meditation.

If you have the skills to share, please come forward - either nationally by emailing learning@u3a.org.uk or within your own u3a.

If you do get a new group going this year, please let us know by emailing communications@u3a.org.uk

What Is Our Digital Strategy?

Clive Grace, Chair of the Third Age Trust Trading Limited, and Liz Thackray, CEO of the Third Age Trust, talk about the movement's digital strategy and how it will benefit u3as in a new video. Watch it below.



Liz Thackray and Clive Grace talking about the digital strategy of the u3a movement - introduced by Sam (CEO)

[Read the transcript of Liz and Clive's conversation](#)



Ask Sam Your Questions

Tuesday 14 February is your next opportunity to talk to Sam Mauger, the CEO of the Third Age Trust, and ask her your questions about the movement. This is part of the Conversations With series - bringing the movement together through discussions.

Please note, this is a change of date as there was a clash.

Book now on [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com) and please submit questions by 10 February to ceo@u3a.org.uk



The Board of Trustees and members of u3a office sharing ideas with each other at a strategy day.

Could you be a Third Age Trust Trustee for your region?

There are currently vacancies for Trustees in the West Midlands, East Midlands, London and, following the end of the financial year 31 March 2023, Wales. If you are a member in one of these regions and would be interested in standing for election, you can find out more on [the u3a website](https://www.u3a.org.uk) and join our Trustee briefing session on **Friday 3 February** - book your place [on Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com),

Off The Wall

Off the Wall is a u3a member event taking place on the day of, and the weeks leading up to, **10 May 2023**. Find out more on [the u3a website](#).



Off the Wall will draw on your experience, enthusiasm and talents to bring the u3a movement together and showcase the long history and geography of Hadrian's Wall.

See the programme so far on [the Off The Wall page of our website](#) - and if you have a skill to share on the day, please get in touch by emailing thewall@u3a.org.uk.

Do you have questions about the event and want to know more? The organising team are hosting a Q&A event on **28 February**. [Book your spot now](#).

u3a News

Every newsletter, we share news from your u3as. Whatever you're doing, we want to know about it - [get in touch](#).



A beautiful photo for every month of the year

Limebrook u3a's Photography Group have produced a calendar of member's photos with the theme 'Essex Events', **which includes this wonderful photo by Brian Harris.**

Graham has been running the group for nine years and talks about how it works on our [our Sources blog](#).



VIPs join Bradford u3a for anniversary tea party

Bradford u3a was one of the first u3as to be formed, in 1984. They celebrated the movement's 40th Anniversary with an afternoon tea. It was attended by the Lord Mayor of Bradford along with representatives of the Yorkshire and the Humber Region, Pat Collard and Margaret Fiddes, and the Chair of the Third Age Trust, Liz Thackray.



Shining a lantern on u3a

Wells u3a took part in an annual lantern parade in their local community. Members came together and learnt how to make lanterns from willow and tissue paper in different shapes. The theme was the natural world

and the environment and so the group decided to create a dolphin.

The parade started at Wells Cathedral before taking to the streets - spreading the u3a message and connecting members with other people in the community.



Bedale & District u3a's Have-A-Go Craft Group created an origami graffiti installation to promote u3a. It is made up of hundreds of origami shapes including a swarm of butterflies and a flock of cranes.

Third Age Matters

Have you ever wondered if your pet is happy? Read how you can enhance their lives in the February issue of Third Age Matters magazine with pet psychologist Lucy Lofting, pictured here with her dog Biggie - photographed by Russel Sachs.

Plus, Dame Esther Rantzen on looking after your money as you get older; the u3a members who swam the rapids of the Olympic white water course, and how to make your own podcast, learn coding or make a robot.

Third Age Matters is one of the perks of u3a membership - if you are a member and don't currently receive it, please talk with your u3a committee.



Your Stories

I was very excited when I learned that as part of u3a's 40th Anniversary, the Walking Group would be walking around the famed Hitchin HOOP.

As a newcomer to Hitchin and knowing only my family, I had joined u3a a few months previously in the hope that it would enable me to enjoy new experiences and make new friends. Walking the HOOP delivered this in spades. I was immediately engaged in conversation with other members, some new like myself and others longer term. As we shared our lives, stories and laughter the miles melted away.

Pauline of Hitchin u3a was one of the many East of England u3a members who recorded their walks in September. The walks have now been put together in a booklet available [on the East of England region website](#) - and you can read Pauline's excerpt on [our Sources blog](#).

Learning

Below is a snapshot of the [learning initiatives](#) on our website that members can get involved with.



What's the best photo you've taken?

u3a members regularly showcase their incredible talent in our two ongoing photography initiatives: [Found in Nature](#), in which members share the beautiful and wild things they've seen in nature, and [u3a eye](#), a monthly photography challenge with different themes - February's theme is 'repetition.'

Find out more on [the learning pages](#).

Photos by Steve of Northallerton u3a and David of Mawdesley Villages u3a



Is it cake or a bouquet of flowers?

Thank you to everyone who took part in our cake decorating initiative. There were so many beautiful cakes submitted, including the above by Maureen of Oundle u3a. See other examples on [the learning initiative page](#).



Resources for your Group

As part of the u3a Speaker Swap initiative, there is now a downloadable list of talks on offer, which you can share with your u3a groups coordinator or leader. Sign up to Speaker Swap on [the learning pages](#) and access a wealth of fantastic talks that u3a members are offering.



Don't miss the latest u3a radio podcast - listen to the episode with captions on [our YouTube channel](#), or on podcasting platforms including [Apple](#) and [Spotify](#).

Subject Advice News

See all the latest updates and the full list of **Subject Advisers** on [the Subject Advice page](#).



Learning More About: Folk Music Playing with Sarah from Gloucester and District u3a

How did you get started with folk music playing?

Although I've been involved in music all my life, as a performer and as a teacher, I only joined a folk band on retirement. We were living in Australia, in a city with a very active u3a that included a thriving folk band. Returning to the UK and finding our local branch didn't have anything similar, I volunteered to begin one myself.

Can you give two tips to members who want to start their own group?

We started seven years ago, growing gradually through flexibility. Some of the band play/sing by ear or from lyrics and chords, while others read sheet music with different degrees of fluency. We try to ensure accessibility to all - the other

tip is, most importantly, make it fun!

What help do you provide to groups, members or anyone thinking of starting a group?

I can offer a sounding-board for aspects including; time and commitment; purpose (is your group purely for fun or possibly playing for others at some stage?); repertoire (how widely to cast your net for songs - for example, we're largely acoustic and generally play music that isn't under copyright.)

In addition to exploring sources, I'm happy to help with arrangements of particular pieces.

Find out more and contact Sarah on the [Folk Music Subject Advice page](#).

Do you need inspiration for your interest group? Find more updates and resources from Subject Advisers in [creative writing](#), [Genealogy](#), [Maths and Stats](#), [Exploring world faiths](#), [Shakespeare](#), [US and UK politics](#), [Yoga](#), [Magic](#) and [Local History](#) - on the [Subject Advice page](#) of the website.

News from the Board



Liz Thackray, Chair of the Third Age Trust

Although we are now well into January, I would like to take this opportunity to wish everybody a happy new year.

As with the past three years, it looks as though 2023 is going to present us all with a number of challenges with continuing disruption to rail travel and other services, inflation, concerns about power supplies and climate change and continuing concerns about the wider world, including Ukraine.

What the past three years have taught us is that u3as are resilient and that members do all we can to support each other in our many and varied activities. **Even when the odds seems stacked against us, we continue to learn, laugh and live.**

This year will present new opportunities, including participation in the Hadrian's Wall event in May, and new challenges as we consider our plans and structures in order to be Fit for the Future.

No doubt there will be debate and some disagreement, but **hopefully we will emerge at the end of 2023 as a stronger movement with a clear sense of direction for the future, knowing we have overcome the challenges and are continuing to move forward together.** I guess if life were easy, it would be not be so interesting!

Social Media News



A Celebrity Visitor at High Wycombe & District u3a's Tree Planting

Despite the cold everyone who joined us for our long awaited tree planting enjoyed an afternoon of sparkling frost, bright sunshine and good cheer when Jay Blades "planted" our tree. It was the first one he had been asked to plant and he was quite surprised not to have to dig the hole himself! This was a great finish to the events we planned to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the national u3a. Thanks to everyone who made it such a happy event, finishing up with welcome coffee and mince pies and a tour for those with some extra energy.

High Wycombe & District u3a finished their 2022 by planting a commemoration tree, with special guest Jay Blades. It was the final celebration in what was a packed anniversary year for them.

See many more pictures on [their Facebook page](#), which through its varied and dynamic posts showcases just what an exciting movement u3a is.

Do you want us to showcase your social media in this newsletter? [Email us](#) or tag us in your posts - click the icons below to find our social media profiles.



Your Stories

The South East Northumberland and Coast Chairs and Business Secretaries Network is an informal peer support network. We welcome any chair or business secretary in the region or nationally. We all have the same goals. These are to help our u3as to grow, be vibrant and be places where members can experience pleasurable learning in a social setting.

Fun is vital!

Catherine, Chair of the South East Northumberland and Coast Chairs and Business Secretaries Network

This network featured in News for Networks - a newsletter especially for members of u3a networks. You can sign up on [the Network page](#).

Sources

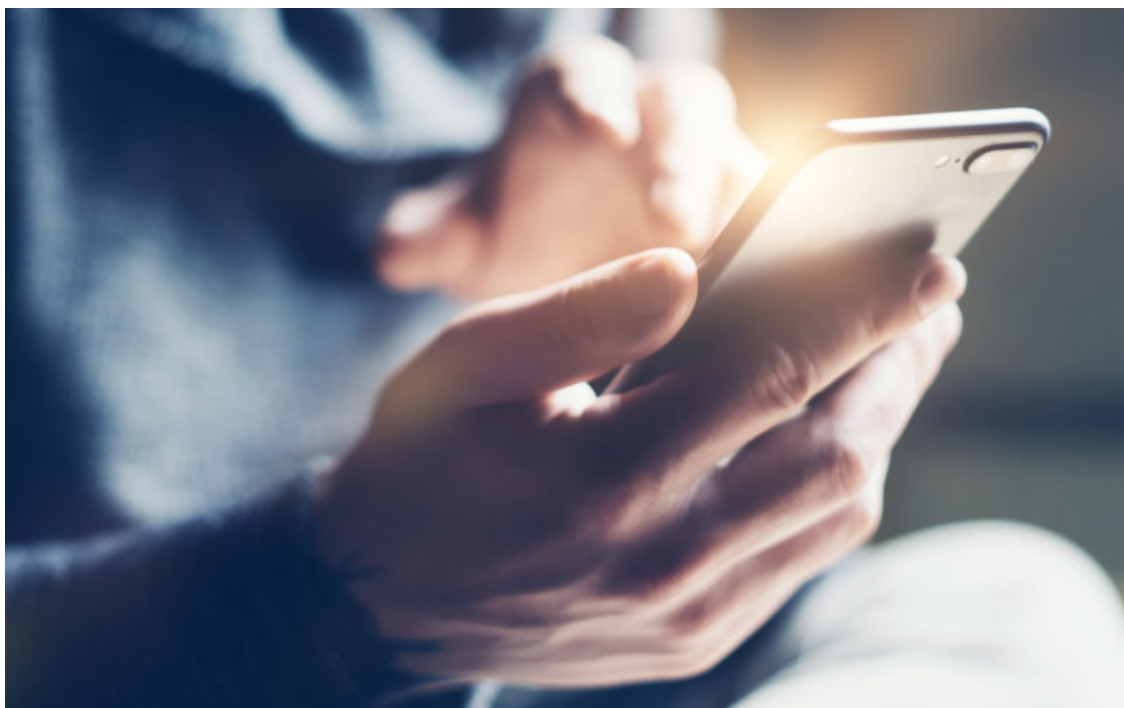
There are lots more member-led stories on [our u3a blog](#), [Sources](#).



u3as in Leigh worked with a local museum to put together an exhibition exploring the changing face of their high street over the years - and over 500 people attended.

Also on our blog this month, Nick from Ruthin u3a shares some tips on ways that members can become more eco-friendly in 2023, Cecilia from Northumbria Network's Creative Writing group talks about a recent collection of seasonal writing they have published - and much more.

Media News



Penicuik u3a's Smartphone Surfers group featured in The Daily Express where the group spoke about how they shared their knowledge of phones and technology with each other. Read the full story on [the Express website.](#)



When Michael, of Wyre Forest u3a, couldn't find anywhere to play pickleball near him, he set up his own u3a interest group. **It has become so popular that the players were interviewed by BBC Radio Hereford and Worcester on 11 January.** Listen to the broadcast on [BBC Sounds](#) - 1 hour 8 minutes in.

Four members of Lanark and District u3a told their romantic stories to The National newspaper, and shared how u3a added to their relationships and lives. Between them, they are members of Scrabble, gardening, ukulele, poetry and circle dancing groups. Read their story [on The National website](#).

Another Lanark and District member, Loraine, hit the headlines when she was **awarded the British Empire Medal for voluntary services to the community in The King's first Honours List.** She managed to keep the secret for over a month - not even telling her family - until it was revealed by Buckingham Palace on New Year's Day. Read Loraine's story in [Glasgow World](#).

Your Stories

u3a Halstead French and German groups meet online twice a month. We welcome u3a members from other areas. We work on conversation, reading, grammar, games, songs and anything that members ask for.

If you would like to know more about either group, get in touch with communications@u3a.org.uk and they will pass you on to me for further information and the link.

Jane, Halstead u3a

National Events

Here is a snapshot of some of the interesting events for members that are coming soon. You can book onto all of these events on the [online events page](#).



The Geology of Oil and Gas - Part 3

Thursday 2 February, 2pm

This is the third part of a series of talks on petroleum geology from Sutton u3a member Martin.



Fashion and Sustainability

Friday 3 February, 2pm

Join Helen from Canterbury u3a, for an introduction to the environmental impact of textiles.



Highlights of the Royal Collection - Coins and Medals

Tuesday 7 February, 10am

Jeremy of Rother and District u3a, who was Numismatic Consultant to the Royal Collection for 8 years, discusses some of the coins and medals within the collection.



Historic Environment Scotland: Caring for Our Heritage

Thursday 16 February, 2.30pm

Whether you live in Scotland or are planning a visit, this event will explore how to get the most out of visiting a Historic Environment Scotland site, and the volunteering opportunities available.

Share your skills - teach in Further Education

The Department for Education's Share Your Skills campaign is calling on skilled workers to share their valuable expertise and train the next generation of workers in their field by teaching in Further Education.

If you've got experience in a field and want to get paid to share your skills, visit the [Teach in FE website](#) to find out how.

Social Impact

u3a is developing the movement's voice to make a social impact. Read about ongoing projects [on our Impact page](#).



More Influencing and Social Change Training for 2023

Based on feedback from our pilot sessions at the end of 2022, we are excited to continue to offer training to support members to take action on issues of importance to them in their local communities.

Online and in person training sessions will now be in two parts - the first

focusses on sharing information and the second provides an opportunity for participants to feedback on any steps they've taken. The first online session for 2023 will be on **Monday 27 February at 10am**. [Register on the Social Impact page.](#)

There was a brilliant response to the information about eligibility for Pension Credit in our last newsletter. If you haven't had a chance yet, you may be eligible. A successful claim could provide an additional £3,500 a year. Find out more on [the pension credit website.](#)

Services and Offers

u3a Offers and Services is a new section of the newsletter offering discounts to u3a members and friends.



u3a Click and Save: everyday savings

Don't forget, that through the [u3a Click and Save](#) scheme, you can receive a discount on many big brands including Sainsbury's, Asda, Currys and M&S.

How do you access u3a Click and Save?

You can access the scheme by following these steps:

1. Create an account on [the u3a Click and Save website](#).
2. Click on the link in the confirmation email and then log in.

u3a Office In Focus

This section puts a spotlight on the staff who work at u3a office and what we're doing.



Meet Jenni

Hello everyone, I'm Jenni.

I have worked full time with The Third Age Trust since February 2008 and it has become a big part of my life!

I started off in admin and I am now one of the Finance Officers within the Internal Services Team.

My role involves keeping The Third Age Trust/Third Age Trading Ltd accounts up to date in preparation for our yearly audit. I record all income/expenditure, liaise with u3a's regarding outstanding or overpayments and perform monthly reconciliations. I assist the Head of Internal Services with a number of financial tasks including the annual budget and produce quarterly managements accounts.

I am also responsible for the classified adverts in Third Age Matters (TAM).

It has been very inspirational over the years watching staff, Trustees, volunteers and members working together to grow and develop the u3a. I am privileged to be a part of the team.

Advice News

See all the latest advice on [our advice pages](#). Also on the Advice section is our [programme of workshops](#).



Supporting You with Finance Matters

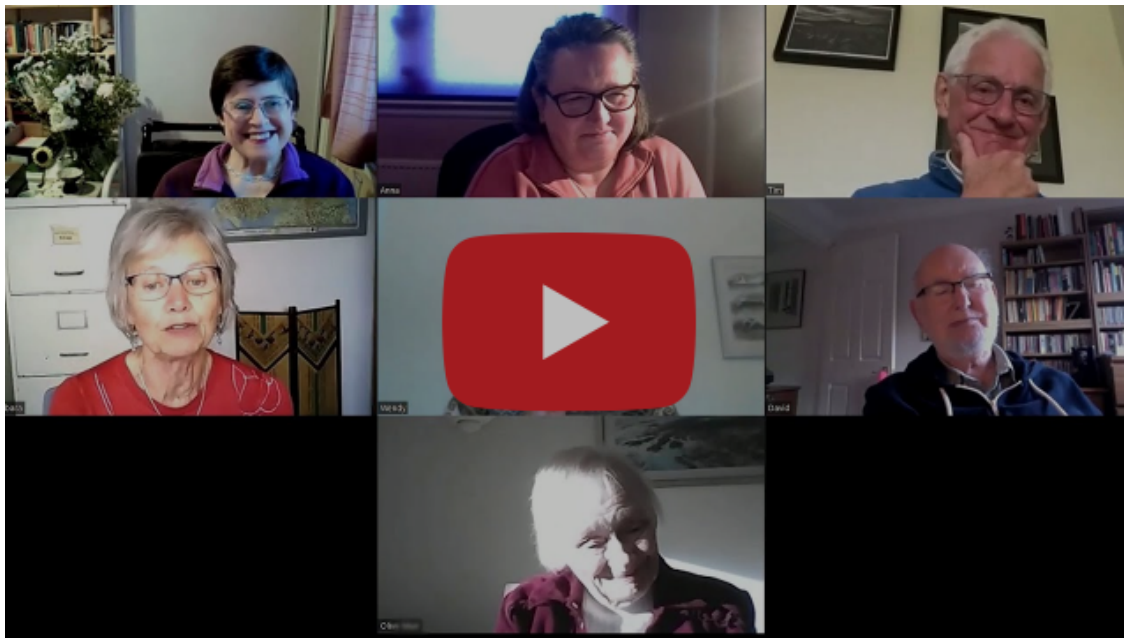
Do you have a new Treasurer joining your committee, are you thinking about becoming a Treasurer, or do you want to have a refresher on what the role entails?

If yes, then our Finance Matters workshop is for you. The next one is taking place on **Wednesday 1 February** - book your place on [the Workshops page](#), where you can also find out more about other upcoming workshops.

Spotlight On

u3a across Scotland's Poetry Group were kind enough to let us record their poetry session - you may have spotted them in [our Meet Jane video](#) that came out last month.

You can see [the full recording of their poetry session on our YouTube channel](#) and below is a highlight, where each member shares what they love about u3a and their group.



u3a across Scotland Poetry Group is our Spotlight On this month.

Read the transcript of this video

This is an easy way to share the newsletter. Click this [link](#) and copy and paste the URL to share on other platforms, including Beacon.



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