

July 2022

Phone National Office: 0208 466 6139 [u3a.org.uk](http://u3a.org.uk)



## Introduction from Sam Mauger

Dear members,

Many of us have certainly experienced very different summer weather to an average British summer – but as usual u3as are making the most of every day.

**u3as are experts at changing and adapting and embracing new opportunities and this is the prevailing theme in this newsletter. We will be making the most of every minute.**

Some members have called this the renaissance period or the reformation period, even the re-emergence period, following the last two challenging years.

**The energy is back and the Trust, u3as, volunteers and staff are ready to embark on this new stage of our journey.**

We are in this together and together we will continue to embrace change and live u3a life to the full.

With very best wishes

Sam Mauger  
CEO of the Third Age Trust

## News from the Trust

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### What kind of u3a do we want to see in the future?

#### A message from Chair, Liz Thackray

Last autumn the u3a initiated a strategy review focusing on the future of the u3a – it's image and direction of development. We know our membership took a hit during the pandemic but the good news is that many u3as are growing again.



If we want a growing and thriving movement that is fit for the future and relevant to those entering their third age, we need to ensure the wider movement is properly supported financially – and that means ensuring the national u3a is properly funded.

Increasing the membership subscription is something nobody really wants to do, especially at a time when we are all facing increasing costs that are putting pressure on all our purses.

The subscription paid by u3as to the Trust has always been contentious. Unlike most similar voluntary organisations, the u3a does not have the power to impose subscription increases on members. The members decide on any increases – and there is a resolution going to the AGM proposing an increase in the membership subscription paid by u3as to the Trust.



**As Eric Midwinter, one of the founders of the u3a movement in the UK, wrote many years ago, imposing increases is not the u3a way: "True to its belief in the primacy of the local unit, the national u3a had never for a moment considered that over-mighty route." He went on to quote a colleague: "...it is one thing to be locally autonomous. It is another if autonomy is claimed in order to imply (local u3as) can feel free of any obligation to the**

**larger movement."**

So, what kind of u3a do we want to see in the future and are we prepared to pay to make it happen?

### u3as in the Media

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There have been over 100 mentions of u3a in the media since our last newsletter. A particular highlight was a feature in The Express about Burnham u3a and their archaeological discovery of a medieval palace, pictured.



Nationally, we featured in the leading monthly magazine for men and women over 50 – Choice Magazine as well as appearing in Dignity Magazine and the British Patchwork and Quilting Magazine. Local highlights include Paisley & District u3a's Picnic in the Park, pictured, which featured in the regional Paisley Daily Express.

Lynne from Harrow u3a also had an in depth interview with Radio London in she they talked all about u3a.

## u3a News

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### The Art of Working Together

Long Eaton & District u3a's Art Group created a collage of watercolours based on a view of Matlock, pictured. There was a lot of laughter as members worked together to make their sections – the u3a way.



### u3a and TFL Shared Learning Project Nominated for an Award

u3a members from across the UK have been working with TfL's Corporate Archives to develop the Revealing the Past Minutes Transcription and Indexing Project. The project is nominated for the Record Keeping Project of the Year Award.



### Chipping Norton u3a Quilt

Chipping Norton u3a have created their own quilt to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Made by their craft group, each panel illustrates one of their interest groups – from knitting to cycling.

## u3a Office In Focus

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*This is a new section putting a spotlight on the staff who work at u3a office and what we're doing.*

### Meet Harriet, Policy Officer

Hello! My role is to create and support initiatives to develop the u3a voice – to have a greater impact and raise the profile of the movement.

Recently, I've been collaborating with organisations including Centre for Ageing Better and Design Age Institute on projects to change the narrative on ageing. I've also been connecting with policymakers and supporting u3as to take action in their communities.



## Your Stories

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I am presently visiting my family in Ontario, Canada. I miss my friends in my local u3a in Seaton, but they kindly keep in touch.

In the meantime, I am kept busy in my daughter's lovely garden, and in continuing writing up my memoirs. Today, I am surrounded by black and grey squirrels, a variety of birds and an occasional rabbit and chipmunk.

I really enjoy receiving the u3a newsletters and reading about the activities of members living in areas such as the north of England, where I was born and which I remember so well.

– Sylvia, Seaton u3a



## Spotlight On:

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### Sue, Wyre Forest u3a (left)



I come from a showbiz family but when I was younger, I had no confidence. **I had no belief in myself at all – certainly not when it came to singing and dancing, although I loved to do both.**

In 1966, my father was playing piano for the-then-Gerry Dorsey [who went on to achieve worldwide success as Englebert Humperdinck.] At the end of the show, he asked me to go on stage and I agreed to sing while he played piano. I opened my mouth but nothing came out. **After the sixth go he said, “Sue, you will be able to sing on stage at some point in your life. Just be patient.”**

In 2012, I joined Wyre Forest u3a and the What A Performance group. **I wasn’t brave enough to sing but being in the group unleashed the frustrated producer-director in me.**

Everything I had seen growing up in musical theatre came to the fore as I began putting on shows for our members.

Reluctantly I was eventually convinced to sing in our “60’s Recall” show. My friend David was Sonny and I was Cher and we were both scared to death. **But this time, when I opened my mouth, the words came out.**

Englebert’s words came true and it was all because of u3a. I told people, **“This is the moment Englebert said I would have: If only I’d had the courage to get on stage back then!**

I have become a lot more confident with myself as a person – it’s actually very noticeable. **And it’s totally down to u3a. If I had not joined u3a I, quite frankly, would never had had the opportunity to do the things I have done.**



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Headline photos: Table toppers for Mapperley and District u3a (MaD u3a)’s 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mad Hatters Tea Party; a ukulele session at the South East u3a Forum Summer School; Ilkley u3a’s Photography for Beginners group hosted a photo exhibition including this photo by member Paul

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