

# u3a Newsletter

February 2023

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



## Introduction from Sam Mauger

Dear members,

Recently I was told about a discussion about the future of Britain in 2023, it focused on what was needed to make a difference in these very uncertain times.

It was argued that one of the key indicators of success was whether a sense of community and common ground could be fostered, so that there was a culture of trying to make a difference together.

It struck me how at its best the u3a movement is an example of this, and how making a difference in the future can be in our collective hands.

There are always updates from u3as about what they do together and what they do for their communities, this newsletter being no difference and shows the significant impact that u3as continue to make.

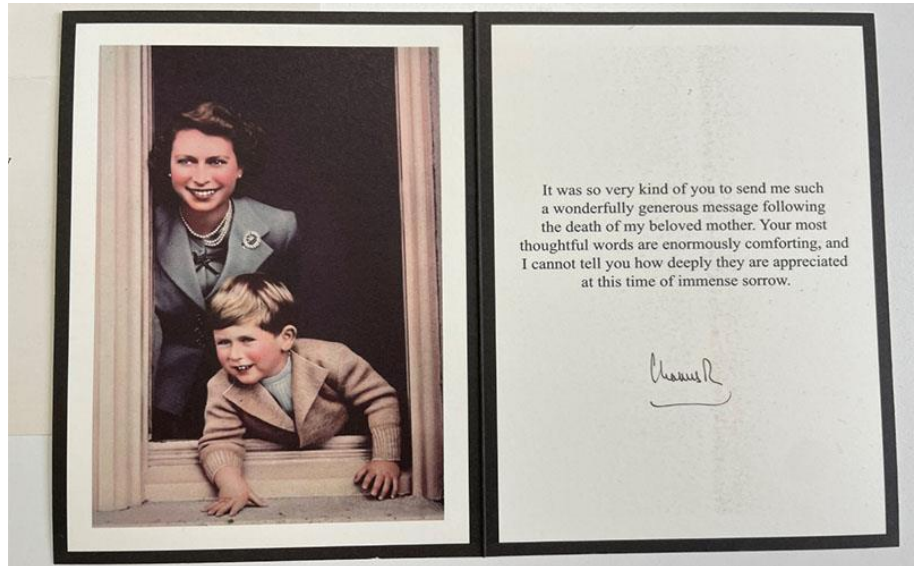
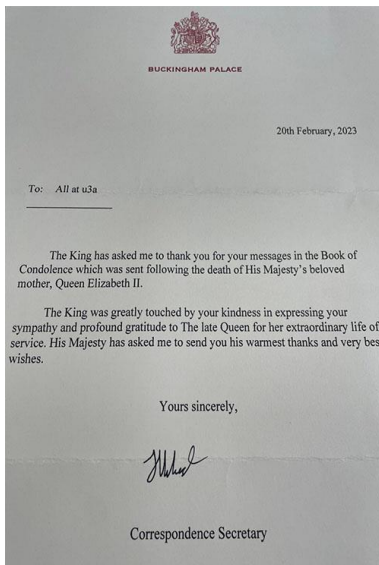
With very best wishes

Sam Mauger

CEO of the Third Age Trust

## A Letter from The King

---



We received this letter and photo from the King this week. Our book of condolence had more than 600 messages from across the movement.

## News from the Board

---

### Liz Thackray, Chair of the Third Age Trust

A few days ago I received a fascinating email outlining some research into the brains of 'older people'. I learned that absent-mindedness and forgetfulness are due to overabundance of information and those of us between 60 and 80 are at the peak of our mental and emotional potential. Cheering news for all of us!

The last 3 years have been challenging. Sitting in a sunny window and planning a holiday for the first time since covid prevented our planned adventure in 2020, **I am very much aware that we are all in different places on our post-pandemic journey.** Some have already embraced life as it was pre-pandemic while others remain cautious. Some of us have somehow avoided covid while others are continuing to suffer its effects and others have bounced back from one or more infections.

For us as u3a members there is an urge both to look ahead to new opportunities but also a desire to return to old familiar ways of doing things. **What are the things we have learned and done differently over the past 3 years that we want to retain?** Which activities do we want to reinstate? Are there things we now want to do differently?

**The national summer schools are not returning, but regional summer schools are being promoted.** Decisions need to be taken on the national conference. What is clear from the response to change is that there is no way of pleasing all the people all the time. But too much looking backwards can mean we fail to move forwards. **So if we really are at the best level in our lives, as the research study suggests, what are we wanting to do ensure all the good things are still ahead of us...**



### u3as Plant a Lasting Legacy

Members from across the movement have been planting trees to mark the u3a 40th Anniversary.

**Olton & District u3a** members planted a birch tree in a local Solihull park.

**Cliff Villages (Lincoln) u3a** have planted several trees in a number of our local villages. Many members also contributed to the making of a quilt.

Volunteers from **Plymouth u3a** Plymouth u3a planted over 500 trees on National Trust land in Plymbridge Woods on the outskirts of the city. BBC Spotlight, the region's news and magazine outlet sent their reporter John Henderson to cover the event and BBC Radio Devon provided regular updates on their news bulletins.

### Quilted Hearts

Duns and District u3a's Arts and Crafts group have created quilted hearts which they plan to leave around the local community for strangers to find and brighten their day.



### Loving Cricket, Walking Cricket and u3a

---

Cricketing legend – Dickie Bird OBE – an honorary member of Barnsley u3a, wanted to talk to you all in our newsletter community.

"As I approach my 90th Birthday, I will still be out and about health permitting enjoying cricket related activities.

I am reminded that last year I visited a fantastic women's match of Walking Cricket in the indoor centre at Headingley. Now this is a fantastic game for older people, developed by Yorkshire Cricket Foundation in partnership with u3a.

I know that there is now planned the very first Walking Cricket County match, Yorkshire V Worcestershire, 15 June at Monk Bretton Cricket Club in Barnsley. I will be there!

Yes there are Test Matches, County Matches, The new 100 etc, but it is also great to know that semi-retired and retired men and women are also engaged in our beloved sport of cricket across our wonderful County of Yorkshire."

---



## Spotlight On:

---

### Richard, Glenfield u3a



Richard is a former prisoner of war who was shot down over Belgium in World War II. Richard joined Glenfield u3a when he was 92 with his late wife Joan. He became a member of several interest groups, including German speaking.

He said: "My desire with joining the German interest group was to understand the language and the people, after my experience.

The u3a is a lifeline for me. I can't emphasise enough how important it has been for my wellbeing."

Newlywed Richard was part of No 613 Squadron, which was tasked with low-level night flying to destroy trains, tanks and buildings around St Vith in the Battle of the Bulge.

A burst of fire penetrated the cockpit of the de Havilland DH.98 Mosquito Richard was navigating, injuring his legs and shredding the controls. Richard and pilot Ken Baird bailed out and landed safely, but Richard was picked up by a German patrol and taken to various prison camps.

Richard belongs to the u3a gardening and history groups but describes the Glenfield u3a luncheon group as the most fun.

"The reason I enjoy u3a so much is the extreme level of friendliness and cooperation within the movement. Since I reached 100, help from other members has been instantaneous. No matter which groups I've been in there's been support available. If there's some tricky steps on a garden visit, there's always a helping hand. There's a desire within u3a to make new people feel at home."



---

Headline photos: Dartmouth u3a art group's first public exhibition; Barnsley u3a's Beginner Guitar group who didn't know how to play a chord in January and who are now preparing for their first live performance; heliotropes photographed by Haywards Heath u3a's Nature Walks group.

**u3a**  
156 Blackfriars Road  
London, UK  
SE1 8EN

#### Contact the National Office

Tel: 020 8466 6139  
Email: [info@u3a.org.uk](mailto:info@u3a.org.uk)  
[u3a.org.uk](http://u3a.org.uk)

 [twitter.com/u3a\\_uk](https://twitter.com/u3a_uk)  
 [facebook.com/u3auk](https://facebook.com/u3auk)