

February 2022

Phone National Office: 0208 466 6139 u3a.org.uk



Introduction from Sam Mauger

Dear members,

With Spring just around the corner – I hope we will see a welcome change from the rain, storms and hail which has been battering the UK this month. I hope you have managed to stay safe and warm throughout it all.

There is a lot happening across the movement this month.

Specsavers are promoting our members' skill sharing videos; we have launched the new u3a film – celebrating your u3a life; and we welcome the 500th u3a to Beacon, our membership management system.

Thank you to the Repair Shop TV presenter, Jay Blades, for his support and positive message for our 40th anniversary celebrations – we hope this will be the first of many more messages of support as the year progresses.

I hope you enjoy this latest newsletter which again pays tribute to your talents, energy and enthusiasm.

With very best wishes

Sam Mauger

Chief Executive of the Third Age Trust

Sharing Skills with Specsavers

u3a members have created tutorials as part of a new series with Specsavers highlighting the skills of #GenerationWOW and the benefit of sharing skills between generations.

The first tutorials, which can be seen on the Specsavers website, feature Steph McGovern, who is supporting the campaign, learning to paint a landscape from her father, Sherburn & Villages u3a member Margaret creating a flower centrepiece using a shop bought bouquet (pictured), and Edinburgh u3a member Judith explaining the benefits of laughter yoga.



We Are 40



Happy Birthday from Jay Blades

Jay Blades, known for The Repair Shop, wished us a happy birthday in a video shared on our social media platforms this month.

He says in the video, "How are we doing u3a? Hope you are well, I just wanted to say happy 40th birthday."

"Really good organisation and always looking out for people cor blimey. I'm just here recording the Repair Shop. Am absolutely freezing. Got no gloves on – that's why my hands are in my pocket – but have a good one."

Jay is just one of several familiar faces who will be popping up to wish us a happy birthday throughout the year.

It's All Coming Up Roses for Southport u3a's 40 Anniversary Plans

Southport u3a will be creating a show garden for Southport Flower Show as their way to celebrate the u3a 40th anniversary. Lisa, Gardening Group Leader, says, "We are thrilled and excited to undertake this Show Garden. We have some great ideas for it, and we hope that this Show Garden will encapsulate all the great things we stand for in the u3a."



u3a in the Media

Our CEO Sam and various trustees spoke on local radio across the UK this month about the music survey, ageism and how u3a members are living their best lives.

Our #GenerationWOW campaign with Specsavers and Steph McGovern resulted in stories in The Mirror, The Express, The Daily Star, The Sun, Hello Online, and regional press.

Nairn u3a member Pauline spoke about writing romance novels in The National on Valentines Day.

Bristol u3a featured in The Bristol Magazine.

News from the Board

Chair of the Third Age Trust, Liz Thackray

The next Board meeting will be on 3 March. Amongst other agenda items is succession planning.

This year five Trustees finish their term of office. Some will retire and a couple may put themselves forward for a further 12 months, but all have said how difficult it is to find a successor. In that respect the Board is no different from many u3as!

We are planning some information sessions but would invite all members to consider whether they have experience of financial management, governance or strategic planning – and whether they might be just the people the Board needs as Trustees. If that is you, please try to attend an information session and find out more, or speak to your regional/national Trustee about what the job entails.

u3a in the Media

News day for Culm Valley u3a

Culm Valley u3a had their first meeting of 2022 in February and were visited by the press.

Chair, Sue, says, "We had asked members to invite a friend to our meeting and they did just that. We had over 80 attend the meeting, 15 of which were friends of members and all of them signed up for membership."



There were display tables for each of the 16 interest groups at Culm Valley u3a and the article appeared on Devon Live.

Your Stories

We loved hearing from members about their favourite music and why they love it after we put out our music survey last month. This is one of the stories we received back, from David of Mill Hill u3a.

For the last 6 years I have been running a weekly drop-in Singalong class for Mill Hill u3a, North West London. For a Singalong you don't need to have a good voice – just the enthusiasm to enjoy the music. Attendance is 9 to 15 every week. We currently sit 4 feet apart with the doors and windows open. I create playlists in Spotify and play any songs which members request through a big speaker (Bluetooth) (that are easy to singalong to). I also make printed song sheets so that for every song the singers have the words in their hands (5 songs to a page). One year we did all the musicals from 'Show Boat' to 'Chicago'. We particularly like 'My Fair Lady', 'Oklahoma', 'The King & I', 'Guys & Dolls'.

– David, Mill Hill u3a

Spotlight On:

Bonny, Brighton & Hove u3a



How did you first come to join u3a?

I initially joined Guildford u3a when I started working part time in my mid-50s. A year before our retirement, my husband and I decided to move to Brighton and Hove and immediately joined the local u3a to help us integrate into the city.

What is your favourite thing about being a part of u3a?

I mostly like the diversity of people I meet, hearing about their life stories and experiences and being inspired by their ideas of 'what shall we do next?' I like groups where expertise and knowledge is shared, where the participants take turns to lead or share. I have really enjoyed the work I've done during the Covid crisis as part of the Committee as I was able to utilise my skills.



Who are your favourite musical artists, and how do you engage in music in your life?

During Lockdown I picked up an old Alto Saxophone (it had been under the bed a while) and started learning to play. I never imagined I would play an instrument and jazz wasn't really my thing, so picking up a Saxophone during Lockdown was more about the challenge than anything else. We now have weekly lessons and we're also in a 30 piece Saxophone Band.

Headline photos: Belfast u3a's first meeting in 2022, Downe u3a on a recent trip foraging for seaweed, Leigh & District u3a's Singing 4 Fun and Ukulele groups singing love songs for Valentine's Day.

u3a
156 Blackfriars Road
London, UK
SE1 8EN

Contact the National Office
Tel: 020 8466 6139
Email: info@u3a.org.uk
u3a.org.uk

 twitter.com/u3a_uk
 facebook.com/u3auk