

U3A newsletter



December



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Founding visit

The Third Age Trust had a special visit this month from Professor François Vellas - the son of Pierre, the founder of the whole U3A movement.

François, whose father Pierre Vellas originally founded the Université du Troisième Age in Toulouse in 1973, discussed the charity's future direction and the challenges which may lie ahead.

François who is president of the International Association of Universities of the Third Age (AIUTA) said, "My father was always very aware of the broader

international movement and I think he would be very proud of how many people in their Third Age across the world are now learning for life and tackling issues surrounding healthy ageing”.



Volunteering

The U3A movement is steeped in volunteering, from Committee Members to the National Executive Committee, and the movement wouldn't function without this significant contribution.

Advice and Volunteering Manager, Sophie Wellings said, “I am looking to recruit, oversee, support, develop and manage the volunteers who contribute to the work of the Trust. There are a number of roles that Trust volunteers are involved with including Mentors to support new U3As with their start up process.”

You can contact Sophie via the [National Office](#).



The Trust has produced a promotional video to help explain the U3A movement to new and prospective members. You can find it on our [YouTube channel](#).

Lifelong learning

Research -- the future

U3A Researchers have met for a lively meeting in Birmingham to discuss the future direction of research projects in the U3A.

Speakers included Gwen Dawe, who spoke on Research Ambassadors, and

Rona Hodges, who gave an inspiring talk on her relationship with Kent universities.

U3A Chairman Pam Jones said, "A huge amount of work has gone into these various projects and it was obvious that U3A has a very high profile as a research resource.

"The new Research committee will consist of members who represent the major areas of U3A research. Areas agreed on included encouraging Research Ambassadors in parts of the country which have no representation and encouraging members to take part in Shared Learning Projects"

Read more in February's new look *Sources* magazine (issue 63).



West Midlands Research Workshop

Around forty U3A members from across the West Midlands took part in the Region's first Research Workshop.

Members looked at what the word 'research' meant to them and discussed

examples of interesting projects, from the Underground map translated into Latin, to how the study of the streets of Uttoxeter had spawned a series of guides.

Research Ambassador Anne Foster, who led the day, said “The aim was to generate curiosity and enthusiasm amongst U3A members; with the hope that we might prompt people to develop their own research. Members fed back that it was a really interesting day with lots of ideas and hope this just the start. Watch this space.”

Cottonopolis

The Greater Manchester Network (GMN) has been developing a large research project called ‘Cottonopolis’ based on the world’s first industrial city, Manchester – known as ‘Cottonopolis’ from 1812.

The GMN project was first proposed by historian Maggy Simms (Bury and Bolton U3As) and actively supported by Jenny Carley.

It is being managed by the network's 12 constituent U3As and hopes to have the participation of the University of Manchester. Cottonopolis covers many areas such as transport, industry, social conditions, art and crafts

Chairman of Bolton U3A and GMN member Tony Pearson said, “Our aim is to host a Study Day in Central Manchester on Saturday 27 January 2018. This is to help U3As identify topics within the umbrella project where they might be able to contribute”.

You can [find out more on their website](#).



Wales Coastline and Border Celebration

Plans for a major project are underway to bring together the experiences and learning of U3A members on their contact with Wales' fantastic coastline and border country.

The project will feature in the all Wales Conference in May 2018 and in a major exhibition early in 2019.

Coordinator Stuart Murray, Flintshire U3A, said "Have you walked a section of the coast path or Offa's Dyke? Enjoyed a visit to an industrial, archaeological, or heritage site? Have a favourite viewpoint, harbour or beach? There are engineering wonders that cross the Menai Strait and Severn Estuary; historic pubs, churches, gardens and docklands; tranquil landscapes.

"The experiences of all U3A members, Welsh residents and visitors will shape the exhibition"

To take part, whether a Welsh resident or a visitor, please email

stuart.murray103@googlemail.com.

Factoid study

Members of Barnet and Dulwich U3As have been helping University College London (UCL) with their two year [FACTOID study](#). The study aims to see whether it is possible to develop a new form of talking therapy based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) for older people experiencing problems with long-term worrying.

Members of Dulwich and Barnet U3As took part in interviews to gather opinions which informed a UCL manual.

UCL is conducting a short survey and want to hear from U3A members who are over 60 years old and are experiencing difficulties with generalised anxiety disorder or long-term worrying.

[Click here to take part in the survey.](#)

Educational resources

Beccles U3A has taken part in a short film illustrating how they learned to ballroom dance by following DVDs provided by the National Office's Resource Centre. The Resource Centre is now buying further DVDs in the series on the request of Beccles U3A.



Save the date - Jazz Study Day 2018

The next U3A Jazz Study Day will take place on **Wednesday July 18, 2018**.

The venue is Cecil Sharp House in Camden, London NW1 7AY. Our guests will be Alan Barnes with his octet. In the morning Alan will give an informative presentation about an aspect of jazz. In the afternoon, Alan and his octet will perform a concert. Booking details will be circulated in a future newsletter.

Events



Record attendance at the All Scotland Assembly

The All Scotland Assembly held in Lanark in November was attended by around 60 delegates, representing 26 U3As including the newly-formed U3As [Glasgow West End](#) and [Paisley](#).

Trustee for Scotland Ed Link, said “There were three main speakers in the morning session. Liz Drury, the new Communications Officer for the Third Age Trust, Ian Brown, Press Officer of RNIB Scotland, and John Ellison, Third Age Trust Treasurer. The afternoon was the first ever Open Forum at the event - chaired by Pat Garland, the chair of U3A Scotland – where members could ask questions of the speakers.

“Members had time to talk and network with each other and the feedback on the day was very positive”.

News from U3As

Strictly Come Dancing

A team of six members from Croydon U3A took part in a special tea dance at Buckingham Palace for the Strictly Come Dancing Christmas Special. Tune in to BBC1 on Christmas Day to find out what happened.



Eggheads vs U3A

The Wembles - a team from Wem & District U3A in Shropshire - took part in the BBC2 quiz show [Eggheads](#).

The show was broadcast on November 13 and while they didn't beat the Eggheads, they certainly put in an impressive performance. Well done to the team - Allan Boyle, Liz Jordan, Glyn Brace, Roger Jones, Paul Young and Len Norton. The story was [covered in their local paper](#) and you can [watch the episode on the iPlayer](#).



Waltham Forest U3A in North London had their photo selected by the Borough as part of a bid for Borough of Culture status. It shows Evelyn, Barbara, Yvonne, Dorritt, Hilary, Nancy and Barbara from Waltham Forest U3A Garden group enjoying a rest after an afternoon of picking peas.

Hedgehogs at St Neots

A large crowd from St Neots U3A in Cambridgeshire welcomed a speaker from the Hedgehog Preservation Society to talk about how to encourage and protect hedgehogs and become a Hedgehog champions.



U3A Ukes play for Scottish Parliament

Dundee U3A's Ukulele group Dee Ukes were invited to play in the Scottish Parliament last month as part of the annual Festival of Politics. Liz Crawford said, "The theme this year was Rebellion and Revolution, so we did a few 'very different' songs including one from an American Heavy Metal Band called Twisted Sister! It went down a storm! We also led a one hour workshop which was all great fun. It certainly proves that age is no barrier to styles of music!"

[Watch on YouTube.](#)

Frankie Billington from **Guernsey U3A**, who this year joined the Metalworking Group, celebrated her 93rd Birthday last week. Happy Birthday Frankie.



News from the NEC

Network Link Meeting

This month saw the first meeting of the Trust with the leaders of over 40 groupings. Its main aim was to establish whether representatives, from as far away as the North of Scotland to Cornwall, wished to meet on a regular basis. The attendees voted to meet again next May and to call the forum the “Network Link”.

Chairing the Network Link, U3A Vice Chairman Ian McCannah said “One of the main objects of the new Network Link will be to improve communication between the 70 U3A groupings in the UK and the Third Age Trust, and vice versa. Another objective will be to ensure that networks receive funding for workshops that assist members run their U3As more effectively”.

For more information, [contact Ian McCannah](#).

Standing Committee for Education (SCE)

The SCE is looking at ways to support learning activities in U3As across the country supporting our charitable purpose of Life Long Learning. SCE chairman, Gillian Russell, said, “We are looking at developing a programme over the coming year with a view to increasing the support the Trust provides for learning in U3As. There are many different aspects to this including meeting and supporting our wonderful Subject Advisers and looking at the possibility of subject networking”

Other news

Lesbian and Gay Forum

Following an article in *Third Age Matters* (TAM), Maggie Jones (Wandsworth U3A West London) has started a LGBT group based in Wandsworth which is open to all U3A members.



Maggie says “I appeared in TAM because there is still a fear among older lesbian and gay people that they may meet hostility. In the first couple of days following publication I received emails from LGBT members of U3A from as far away as Cumbria, East Anglia, the West Country and the South East. Several reported that they are joining Opening Doors London [Maggie is an ambassador].

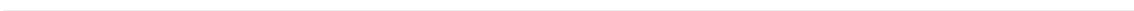
“The new U3A group is open to anyone who wishes to join and not just LGBT people. I personally don't think you can underestimate the importance of having straight people supporting us”.

You can contact Maggie on maggieinlondon@gmail.com.

'Tis the season

U3A members have already begun entering into the festive spirit - below, we

have examples from Richmond U3A photography group, Salisbury U3A origami group, and Lymm & Thelwall U3A flower arranging group.



In Focus



Hilda and Daisy

Wellingborough & District U3A

90 year-old identical twins Hilda and Daisy Bennington joined U3A for the first time last month.

Since retiring in their 50s, Hilda and Daisy have tried amateur operatics, swimming every day and even surfing in Cornwall until they were 75!

Daisy said, “We’ve enjoyed being members of U3A. We found the German group was too advanced, but the Group Leader recommended a book which we are working through by ourselves; we hope to join the next new course when it starts. The Art and Painting group is very good, with some amazing talent.

“Staying active is important to us. It’s no good sitting around! We’ve kept

busy all our lives. Even though we've both had some serious illness at times, it's been essential for us to stay active. We've always been friendly and patient and because the slightest disagreement upsets us - we have never fallen out with each other!"



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