

# March

Welcome to the March newsletter, packed full of articles about the movement.

It has been a busy month for national and international celebrations with St David's Day and St Patrick's Day, not to mention International Women's Day (International Men's Day is in November). If any of you have celebrations marking these or any other events do let us know.

One interesting debate that may resonate with many of you is the "right to repair". Countries across Europe as well as the USA and the UK are beginning to raise the subject of having repairable appliances such as TVs and washing machines.

With U3As already being involved in environmental interest groups and recycling groups, not to mention the

greatly named "Rubbish Friends" group, I am sure there will be many in the movement who will welcome this.

Finally if any of you have members who would like to receive the newsletter please do encourage them to sign up through the [website](#). The newsletter is available to all who wish to receive it.

with very best wishes

Sam

*In this issue...*

Tackling Scams  
**U3A Creativity**  
Improvised Comedy

## News from the Trust

### Finance News

The Trust is aware of the ever increasing threat of fraudulent incidents affecting U3As including:

- Bogus cheques allegedly issued by a U3A (using the same cheque numbers as the authentic cheques)
- Bogus emails to U3A committee members asking them to approve payments
- Bogus invoices being submitted
- Bogus phone calls

This is not an exhaustive list and we will continue to publicise guidance and reminders about how to deal with such matters.

U3A is a supporter of Take Five, a national campaign that offers straight-forward and impartial advice to help everyone protect themselves from preventable financial fraud. For more advice and information go to <https://takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/>

To find out how you can get involved with Take Five's campaign go to <https://takefive-stopfraud.org.uk/take-five-tea/>

If your U3A has encountered any of these issues please

contact U3A Finance Manager, [Kevin Traynor](#)

## **Social Prescribing Day**

The national office has noticed a significant increase in enquires about joining U3A from people who have been referred by their GP.

Some of you have been involved with Social Prescribing Day which took place on 14th March created by the Social Prescribing Network.

Social prescription is for people who visit their GP but who would benefit from friendship, learning and exercise instead of drugs or medicine.

The Trust has now written to every CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group), Regional and Local Health Boards (LHB) in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland - to see how the U3A model can help support schemes that are taking place around the UK.

The Trust is also in conversation with the College of Medicine and the Social Prescribing Network.

You can find out more about social prescribing at <https://www.socialprescribingnetwork.com/>

## **Linking together**

Hilary Jones, the Chairman of Network Link, wants to hear from U3A network members.

Hilary said, “I would love to hear what events networks, clusters or groupings of U3As are organising for their members.

“Northern Ireland does not have networks but all the U3As come together under NIREC – Northern Ireland Regional Executive Committee. Every year they hold a Bridge Congress to which all U3As are invited. What a great idea – an excellent way of encouraging U3As to get together. This year it is on the 7th May and hosted by Causeway U3A.

Similar gatherings and workshops are happening around the country including in the Welsh, Nottinghamshire and Northants Networks.

“The next Network Link meeting is on 17th May and all networks are invited to send a representative. The notification will be going out next month”

What does your network do? Hilary would love to

hear from you. Contact her [here](#)

Go to U3A Facebook page: [Read this article in full](#)

## **Keeping you updated**

### **Arriva**

U3A is supporting Arriva buses Connecting Communities campaign and the website is now live. You can see the national hub [here](#)

### **National Mailings**

Please note that a new mailing was sent to U3As this week which included the Annual Return.

## **Volunteers News**

### **Listening to Trust Volunteers**

As part of starting in her role, the Trust’s Volunteering Officer, Eleanor Hazlewood conducted a brief survey amongst the Trust Volunteers.

The aim was to try to discover what people like about their roles, what, if any, changes they would like to see and what motivates members to volunteer with the Trust.

The majority expressed a high level of satisfaction with their roles and the contribution that they make to the U3A Movement. The primary motivation for volunteering was to support other U3As (83%), with a secondary motive of supporting the Third Age Trust (60%).

Read more on this story on the [U3A Website](#)

## **Advice News**

### **New Documents**

The Trust wants to let you know when new documents are updated and available on the Advice section of the national website.

### **Trustee Induction**

To assist with induction and/or as a refresher for existing committee members a Trustee Induction powerpoint has been developed to assist you moving forward.

### **Health Check**

Are you interested in benchmarking the 'health' of your U3A. A working group of members have developed a set of questions designed to help you review what you are doing as a U3A.

### **Group Leaders Handbook**

The handbook has been developed by the Standing Committee for Education to assist with both the recruitment and induction of new group leaders. The handbook has been developed as a template for U3As to adapt to suit your individuals needs.

Find the Advice section [here](#)

## **Beacon News**

## All Things Beacon

The Working Group looking at the membership management system - Beacon - has got the results of its recent questionnaire to U3A users.

The questionnaire resulted in 176 responses with users placing great value on areas such as the membership administration, groups, sending emails and online payment facilities.

The survey found that, while there are some areas needing improvement, the Beacon system meets the needs of the majority of U3As that use it.

The questionnaire also provided the opportunity for U3As to detail what they needed from an upgraded Beacon system. These broadly fall into six categories; membership, finance, groups, emails, online payments and public and member pages.

The working group now has a rich mix of asks from the

U3A questionnaire, the Beacon questionnaire, and emails responses including some very detailed responses sent into the Chair of the working group.

In April three focus groups will look at membership management in its widest sense including finance and website, social media and other online link requirements.

The new [Beacon website](#) is now live, containing information, news and resources. Visit now to download your copy of this month's [Beacon News](#) – a newsletter dedicated to all things Beacon.

## National Workshops

### Running Your U3A

Trust Volunteers Beryl Shepherd and Carole Chapman (both from Portsdown U3A) led this workshop for U3A members in Horsham on 12th March.

The new Volunteering Officer, Eleanor Hazlewood, was also there to meet the nearly 40 members from local - but sometimes not too local - U3As.

These workshops are popular and they provide seasoned committee members with new ideas, as well as giving new or aspiring Trustees an insight into procedure, practices and potential pitfalls.

Carole said, "Everyone sits with people from other U3As and workshops are a great opportunity for networking. Interactive exercises and discussions meant the delegates gained as much from their neighbours as they did from the specific content of the day.

"There was a real buzz in the room and it was great to see people exchanging ideas and email addresses! In short, a prime example of the U3A ethos in action!".

You can see the programme of workshops [here](#)

## **Building Partnerships**

### **Project with the National Trust**

Thrapston & District U3A in Northamptonshire has partnered with Lyveden National Trust for a project looking at greater detail into Lyveden Manor.

The team, made up of three U3A members, three National Trust volunteers and two who are members of both, started by researching Meriel, Lady Tresham who resided at Rushton Hall and Lyveden Manor.

See more stories like this on [Sources Online](#)

### **U3A University Partnerships**

Following our feature in the last newsletter, many of you have written in about the

partnership your U3As have taken part in with local universities.

These include from Kent to Nottingham and Lincoln to London.

Read the article on Sources Online at <https://sources.u3a.org.uk/>

## **News from U3As**

### **U3A Creativity**

Lyme Regis has been in stitches after members of the Heritage Coast U3A Sewing Group captured the twenty of the landmarks of the town-transposing them onto material in tapestry wool, silks applique and felt.

Brian Hennessy, Causeway U3A had one of his photographs selected for an exhibition celebrating the national Health Service in Northern Ireland.

Brian said, “The actual image was made up of a series of photographs of street lighting

combined into an interesting and attractive abstract final result. We live in a very visual world and I believe photography has an enormous role to play in raising awareness of everyday issues”.

You can see more on both these stories on our Facebook pages [here](#)

See the Get Creative festival in Other News

### **Grant award**

Olton & District U3A have been successful in their application for a community grant using the Tesco/Groundwork Bags of Help scheme which uses the plastic carrier bag charge to fund good causes in the community.

Olton used their award to pay for a hearing loop and improved sound system at Olton Friary where the U3A hold their meetings.

One member said, “It was



lovely, I could hear everything. I wish I could take the loop around with me wherever I go”.

Have you any examples of your U3A securing grants to pay for equipment to enhance the U3A and community around.

Email [Elizabeth Drury](mailto:Elizabeth.Drury@bracknellforest.org.uk)

## **Walking Football Scores**

Crewkerne & District U3A marked three years of playing Walking Football by entering a team in the county FA football tournament for the first time.

The group wanted to score their first competitive goal. In the end they won two games, drew the other four and did not concede a goal throughout! They went through the tournament unbeaten.

You can see more on Walking Sport in the next edition of Third Age Matters out in April.

See more on Walking Cricket in Other News below.

## **The First Community Day in Bracknell**

Bracknell Forest U3A is helping to organise the first Bracknell Community Day with stalls and performances from all ages.

Last year the U3A dancing groups danced in the town to celebrate the National Civic Day.

Everyone is welcome to join Bracknell on the Community Day on 15th June in Bond Square from 11am to 4pm.

## **Lifelong learning**

### **Improvised Comedy**

Horley & District U3A have been running workshops on Improvised Comedy for the last eighteen months.

Retired Civil Servant Jim Palmer said, "I have absolutely no background in comedy but I emphasise to everyone that no experience is needed to learn and enjoy improvised Comedy.

"Improv is about forming short, light hearted sketches made up entirely on the spot. The main purpose of my workshops is for everyone to have a good laugh, but I think doing improv does teach people to listen, to be positive and support other people, as well as giving them confidence to stand up and perform in front of others".

[Find out more](#)

If you are thinking of setting up something similar at your U3A you can contact Jim [here](#)

## **Leather in Shakespeare**

An exhibition of items from the National Leather Collection illustrating Shakespeare's knowledge of

leather in his plays has been curated by members of Northampton U3A.

This exhibition about Shakespeare, his father was a leatherworker and tanned his own leather for gloving, includes a rare Elizabeth 1st "Treacle" Bible, an Elizabethan doublet and gloves as well as Dame Ellen Terry's belt.

The collection is open every Wednesday from May until the end of July 10am – 4pm.

National Leather Collection,  
The Grosvenor Shopping  
Centre, Northampton NN1  
2EW.

[info@nationalleathercollection.org](mailto:info@nationalleathercollection.org)

## **Learning Resources**

### **Life-Saving Course**

Vice Chair of Edwalton,  
Gamston & District U3A in  
Nottingham, George Golledge  
wanted to let U3A know

about a free online life-saving course.

George is also a member of Rotary who develop the resources and have made it available to everyone not just members of Rotary.

Every year more than 150,000 people die unnecessarily because others near them did not know a few simple life saving skills.

You can read a longer version of this article on U3A Facebook page [here](#)

The link for the course is [www.virtual-college.co.uk/prepared](http://www.virtual-college.co.uk/prepared)

## Anyone for Sudoku?

U3A National magazine, Third Age Matters is hoping to expand its games and puzzle section in the coming editions.

To this end, the Editorial board wondered if any U3A members of Sudoku groups might be able to write a

Sudoku puzzle for TAM on a moderately regular basis?

If you are interested please contact

[editor.tam@u3a.org.uk](mailto:editor.tam@u3a.org.uk)

## News from the Subject Advisers

### Update

[Genealogy](#) Subject Advice latest newsletter has a link to MyHistoryDNA which has 5,000 free DNA kits to give away for adoptees to help trace their birth parents.

Other Subject Advice updates include:

- [Play Reading](#)
- [Russian](#)
- [Philosophy](#)

The U3A movement would also like to pay tribute to the Subject Adviser for Architecture, Martin Funnell, who sadly passed away this month.

Martin, a longstanding, much loved member and former Chair of Merton U3A was a true intellectual who convened several popular interest groups on architecture, film, early music, play-reading, and latterly a group titled 'New Frontiers' .

Martin will be greatly missed not only by his wife Frances, but also by the many U3A members who benefitted from knowing him.

## **Education Events**

### **National Summer Schools**

The National Summer Schools are now open for booking

**Aston University,  
Birmingham**  
Monday 12th to Thursday  
15th August 2019

**Royal Agricultural  
University, Cirencester**

Tuesday 10th to Friday 13th  
September 2019

[See the programme and book a place](#)

## **Regional Events**

### **U3A Science Network forges links with Aston university.**

U3A Science Network Meeting is being held at the Conference Aston at Aston University in Birmingham. Presentations and visits will include in the areas of Assistive Robotics, the AIM (Aston Interactive Media) lab, European Bioenergy Research Plant and an interactive Cybersecurity session.

For more information and an application form please go to

<https://u3asites.org.uk/u3asciencenetwork/welcome>

Please note the event is almost fully booked

## **Creative Thinking**

The North West Region is holding an interactive workshop exploring different ways to learn and be involved as an active learner. This will include discussions, exchanging ideas and learning about creative project planning.

For booking details for the event on 30th April in Crewe Alexander Football ground please go to <https://u3asites.org.uk/north-west/events>

## **Upsetting the Apple Cart**

The London U3A Easter Conference includes a lively programme of talks over three days (23rd - 25th April) given by a range of speakers. Sir Thomas Harris will introduce the conference with a talk about famous historical figures and the conference topics will include history, art, music and politics that have all contributed to pivotal changes in society.

Application forms are available by post (please send

a stamp-addressed envelope) to U3A in London, Hampstead Town Hall, 213 Haverstock Hill, London NW3 4QP. Or by download from <https://www.u3alondon.org.uk/?p=3389>

## **The Sussex Spirit, Myths & Legends**

Sussex U3A Network invites u3a members to their exhibition 'Sussex Spirit, Myths & Legends' showing various projects undertaken by interest groups from the network of U3As.

Join SUN on Saturday 13th July at Sussex University. Go to SUN website for more details: <https://u3asites.org.uk/sussexu3anetwork/events>

## **News from the Board**

**Chairman of the Third Age Trust, Ian McCannah**

**Roll of Honour:** The Trust recently received a request, from a U3A, for advice on how the contribution of specific members could be recognised.

Any organisation that is to remain vibrant, and relevant, depends on members willing to give their time and effort to its continued good health. There are members, at all levels of the movement, that provide exceptional voluntary service. It is understandable that U3As wish to recognise their contribution.

The Trust provides advice on the suggested criteria for admission to a Roll of Honour - at both a local and national level.

[Roll of Honour](#)

## Other News

### Get Creative Festival

Get Creative Festival is

shining a light on all the great cultural activity that takes place right across the UK on a regular basis and giving everyone the chance to get actively involved in a creative event in their local area.

U3A Trustee for Scotland Ed Link said, "This could be a big opportunity for U3As to showcase their creative groups"

If you are thinking about staging a local event please register your interest with the National Office by visiting [www.u3a.org.uk/contact](http://www.u3a.org.uk/contact) and clicking on the Get Creative link.

### BBC Radio 3 Winner

John Merrick, Choirmaster of Gloucester & District U3A has won the BBC Radio 3 Carol Competition.

Here is the link to the music he composed to Carol Duffy's Bee Carol, sung by the BBC Singers.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/progra>

[mmes/p06vcss6](https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p070tl2t)

## U3A in the Media

The U3A was mentioned on the **Graham Norton BBC 2 Radio show** last Saturday 9th March.

Walking Cricket in Barnsley U3A - led by Mac McKechnie – has gained coverage across the media in the region.

You can hear Mac on BBC Sheffield's Breakfast Show at around 7.55

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p070tl2t>

Barnsley Gazette Page 2 :  
<http://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&pubid=6a550eb7-b762-45ee-a2dd-768c0942a039>

Mac has been advising other U3As who want to set up something similar and has also volunteered to be the first Walking Cricket Subject Adviser.

## U3A Celebrations

Congratulations to **Newport U3A** who have celebrated their 25th anniversary

## In Focus

### Ian Hibbert Rainworth U3A

I joined Rainworth U3A when it began in October 2013 to accompany my wife.

The singing group was set up in 2015

and I joined in for the Christmas social s accompanist. Although not a very good singer I can play wind instruments, piano, and have worked in amateur musical theatre.

The group - the Rainworth Ringtones - now has 25 members. We sing all types of music at our monthly sessions at a local club and provide entertainment at U3A social events in the village hall.

The Ringtones have added an extra dimension to Rainworth U3A. The group's learning experience extends to me as their director. Working with the Ringtones re-ignited my interest in music after retirement. I have worked on arranging, performance and even composed songs for the group.

A member remarked that "We're lucky to find each other".

The sentiment and meaning moved me to write 'A song for Rainworth U3A' which celebrated what the U3A has brought to us all: making new friends, and learning together as a team in an atmosphere of fun, enjoyment and creativity.

**Did somebody forward this email to you?**

Sign up at [u3a.org.uk/email](http://u3a.org.uk/email) and we will send it to you directly

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