

# u3a friends

September 2024

Phone National Office: 020 8466 6139 [u3a.org.uk](http://u3a.org.uk)



## Introduction from Sam Mauger

Dear friends,

**This is my final newsletter to you all before I pass the baton to Iain Cassidy, the new CEO.**

I would like to say thank you to the wonderful staff team members, past and present, that I have been so privileged to work with over the last eight years. Each one of them is so dedicated to the u3a movement – full of innovation and ideas, and support for u3as and their members everywhere.

**I would like to say thank you to the hundreds of Trust volunteers who give their time and experience so freely to support the movement. I have been so lucky to work with so many of you, you have made a difference to all we can do together.**

I would like to say thank you to the Trustees of the Trust. I worked with over 40 Trustees who have swapped retirement for a fulltime role, dedicated in service to the u3as movement. And in particular to the three Chairs, Pam Jones, Ian McCannah and Liz Thackray, who have steered the work of the Trust through such very different times.

**Finally, I would like to thank u3as everywhere and u3a members who strive to make our communities a place where we live, learn and laugh, and especially to all who read the newsletter.** So many of you have shared stories with me during the years.

**It has been a memorable and life changing eight years.**

Your new CEO, Iain, will be leading the way to the next phase of our work. You will be in excellent hands and I wish him every success in the future.

With very best wishes

Sam Mauger

## Congratulations to our u3a runners!

We want to wish a warm congratulations and thank you to our u3a runners, (pictured, L-R) Joyce from Newcastle u3a, Stephen from Southport u3a, Ashley from Wokingham u3a, and Ken from Sidmouth u3a. They took part in *The Great North Run* earlier this month to raise money for *The Third Age Trust*. The team were cheered on in the pouring rain by volunteers from Whitley Bay and Blyth u3as, who promoted the u3a movement by handing u3a leaflets to people in the crowd.



# friends events

## A week of celebrating the u3a movement

*u3a week* begins this Saturday 21 September and continues until Sunday 29 September. It's a celebration of the learning, fun and laughter that makes up the u3a movement.

This year, Havant u3a are hosting a week full of talks, taster sessions and walks which they are encouraging the public to attend. Chair Elizabeth says, "We're excited to welcome both current members and newcomers to our week of celebration. It's a wonderful opportunity for people to discover new passions and connect with like-minded individuals." Cheltenham u3a are holding an evening of music for members and the public, whilst Harborough Welland u3a are encouraging the public to come meet their u3a creative groups as part of our wider community event, *Creative Harborough*.



*Photo: A banner at one of Ravenshead u3a's previous u3a week events*

# friends impact

## Student research affirms the positive impact of u3a

Earlier this year, two students from *Utrecht University*, Tess and Sherida, took part in a range of u3a activities in a 10-week fieldwork placement as part of their Bachelors in Cultural Anthropology. They have now completed their thesis. Their findings, based on over 40 interviews with members and staff, concludes that u3a can help alleviate loneliness.



*Tess and Sherida (pictured, in the bottom row on the centre) with Croydon u3a members.*

I am currently very much in preparing for the AGM and winding down mode. I will be in London to say thank you and Auf wiedersehen to staff and to attend the Pilot Council meeting. There are a few online meetings, and then the AGM and handing over to Allan.

The past three years have been interesting and challenging in many ways, but the memories I will take away are of the visits to u3as, the enthusiasm of members, and the willingness to share stories with me. We all have so much to learn from each other.

As this is my last newsletter contribution – thanks to everybody – u3a members and staff – for all you have taught me. All good wishes for the future.

*Thank you to Liz for her three years of service to the moment. At the AGM in October, Allan Walmsley will become the new Chair of the Third Age Trust. He will be introducing himself in your October u3a Friends newsletter.*

### Lancaster & Morecambe u3a walking groups complete unique walking challenge

As part of the ongoing celebrations of Lancaster & Morecambe u3a's 35th Anniversary, the six walking groups have completed the unique challenge of bagging 35 Trig Points, the triangulation pillars used to map out the shape of the country.



Pictured is the first trig point that was secured way back in April by the Harder Walks group.



### Waterlooville u3a open day strikes a chord

Waterlooville u3a gained 17 new members after a brilliant open day held in August. Opened by the Mayor of Havant and his wife, the event showcased more than 20 local groups to members old and new.

With the Ukelele and Sing for Fun groups providing the musical entertainment, new and existing members had the opportunity to get to know each other and learn about other groups. By the end of the day, 17 brand new members had signed up, and over 100 attendees had requested to join a new group.

## Finding a new community through u3a



After working as a GP for 43 years, Madhu joined Bromley u3a, which ushered her into a new life.

I came to this country as a young doctor in summer of 1968. The main reason I came was an urge to see the world, but also to gain higher qualifications and financial security. After arriving, I became a GP and remained in the same practice for 43 years.

I was fully engaged with my medical job and role of mother. I just loved my patients, they were not only patients but also friends.

Just before my 80th birthday I retired reluctantly. As I used to work 7 days a week almost 10–11 hours a day, my children and I were very worried that I would get lost, lonely and depressed.

At that time two of my friends one in Croydon and another in Swindon told me about u3a, and I joined in 2023. I attended a coffee morning with few more new members. I felt very much at home and welcomed.



I am now a member of Bridge, Gardening, Wider horizon and Folk dancing groups – and have introduced Indian dancing to the folk dancing group. I also often attend lectures arranged by u3a and some times go to theatre with them.

u3a has been a new lease of life for me. I am also learning new things, for which I had no time while working as a doctor. My children are very happy as they see me well occupied with new activities – I have made new friends and travelled to many places with u3a.

Headline photos: Worksop u3a held a 'give it a go' archery session for their members; CEO Sam Mauer at u3a Festival 24; members of Hale u3a taking part in the Altrincham 10k.

**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)

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