



## Introduction from Sam Mauger

Dear Friends,

As this *u3a Friends newsletter* reaches you, hundreds of members will be arriving at *u3a Festival 24*, which will be the largest meeting of u3a members in the movement's history.

**For me, *Festival 24* embodies the spirit of the u3a movement; members sharing their time and skills with others.** This is the first time the Trust has done something on this scale and it has been led by members Margaret Fiddes and Allan Walmsley with a dedicated planning team of u3a organisers and supported by staff member Julie. **This event is a credit to the hard work of the many u3a volunteers on the ground.** Thank you also to the staff team members for creating the opportunities for sponsorship and for central administration. It will truly be a time to learn, laugh and live.

**We have now reached the amazing number of 50,000 subscribers to the newsletter and members of this u3a Friends community.** I have been involved in this newsletter since it first began seven years ago and it has been lovely to hear you share your stories and to have the enthusiasm of staff members Nelly and Liz Drury who have been the driving force behind this success story.

This is definitely a month for milestones as further down, you will see the fantastic *Beacon* news too.

**Whether July will see you taking part at *u3a Festival 24*, enjoying activities with your u3a interest group, or if you have other plans to celebrate the summer with your friends and family – I hope it is a lovely month for you.**

With very best wishes

Sam Mauger

CEO of the Third Age Trust

## 50,000 members of our u3a Friends community

Seven years ago, we sent out our first u3a newsletter. Since then, this has grown every month, thanks to the incredible support from everyone who has encouraged friends and members of your u3as to sign up. Earlier this week, we reached 50,000 subscribers and we want to say thank you.



## Lifelong learning lessons with Taiwan Ministry of Education

Representatives from The Ministry of Education in Taiwan visited us recently in order to gain understanding of international models of active ageing and lifelong learning.

At a visit to the Third Age Trust office, they learnt about the structure of the u3a movement, the strategy for the future, and the key projects for each team. They then visited Croydon u3a where they were able to experience three different interest groups and talk to members about their experiences. One delegate said, "Visiting you has inspired us to consider new ways to enhance the active aging program in Taiwan."

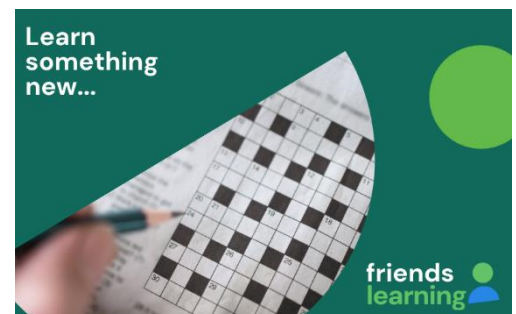
Jenny, Chair of Croydon u3a, says, "We hugely benefitted from welcoming the visitors, sharing ideas and learning about what happens elsewhere."

## Learning more about: Crosswords with Subject Adviser Henry

**What tips would you give to u3a members wanting to set up a crossword group at their u3a?**

Go for it – you will be following in the footsteps of many u3a members, and it's a great way to share the learning and fun from solving cryptic puzzles.

Use all the help available – providing support for group leaders is in the DNA of the u3a movement. You will also be able to draw on group members' capabilities to help with running the group and for crossword solving expertise.



It's the Summer – the time of year when many of us take a holiday and enjoy the opportunity to relax, perhaps doing new things.

The u3a Festival is starting today! I am very much looking forward to York and joining in all manner of interesting activities with fellow u3a members. Many, many thanks to Margaret, Allan, Julie and all the other volunteers and members of staff who have given so much time and energy to make this happen!

Whether you are taking time off at home, going away, spending time with friends, catching up on the gardening or the reading, looking after the grandchildren – I hope the next few weeks will be a time for some rest and recreation for all.

## Two awards for Basingstoke Old Basing u3a

Basingstoke Old Basing u3a celebrated their 25th anniversary in June, and achieved further recognition by winning two awards.

The month began with them winning the *Community Project Award* at the *Destination Basingstoke, Proud of our Place Awards*. Christine, Publicity and PR Officer for Basingstoke Old Basing u3a, says "This award recognises all the hard work our volunteers, group leaders and committee have put into running our u3a for Basingstoke residents. It looks at specific achievements, reaching 1,000 members from a humble start of 48 and introducing new technology."

Member Joyce who leads the u3a Excursions and Holidays group also won the *Group Travel Organiser Award* at *The Group Leisure & Travel Awards*. She has grown the group from 70 to 400 members and says that her "reward is seeing members laugh and enjoying [the] trips, making new friends and sharing their experiences."

## A Chorus of Recorders

u3as across the Midlands connected together for a recorder playing session, with guest conductor Michael Graham.

Val, Recorder Subject Adviser and member of Sutton Coldfield u3a, said, "His approach to leading our recorder playing day was to make it accessible from the least experienced player to challenging the more advanced recorder player. We played music from across the musical eras from Medieval to contemporary Jazz pieces. The sound of 30 recorders playing together was wonderful."



## Nuggets of exercise wisdom with The Green Goddess



Diana Moran, better known as The Green Goddess, has been a household name since the 1980s when she led the exercise segment on *BBC Breakfast Time*. Now, alongside championing fitness for older adults, she enjoys being a member of Elmbridge u3a – and is cutting the ribbon to officially open u3a Festival 24.

### **When did you first become passionate about fitness and exercise? How did it all begin?**

I was an athletic youngster, I ran for the County and played a mean game of tennis. In my 20's I started to teach my girlfriends my fitness techniques. I put the exercises to pop music and was invited to start classes for holiday makers in Butlins Minehead and Barry Island, both close to my West Country home.

I was invited to appear on HTV, my station back home, and then BBC Breakfast followed. The rest, as they say, "is history"!

### **What has your u3a journey been like?**

I have been a member of u3a, on and off, since 2000. [Within u3a, I enjoy] meeting likeminded people, making new friends, learning new skills and absorbing new information. Discussions... Walks... Excursions... Speakers. We really do learn, laugh and live!!!

### **How do you feel about opening u3a Festival 24?**

Excited... but somewhat nervous if the truth be known.

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Headline photos: A photo by Culm Valley u3a member Sue which was displayed at an art exhibition at the local GP surgery to raise awareness of the u3a movement; members laughing at a Biddulph u3a Pickleball group; u3a members at a West Midlands recorder session with guest conductor Michael Graham.

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