



Introduction from Iain Cassidy

Dear Friends,

It's always lovely to hear about the exciting things going on at u3as. Today, I'm meeting members at Weston Turville u3a's summer lunch while earlier this week, I visited Bourne End & District u3a. One of our newer u3as, it has a continuously growing membership. I was impressed to see all of the things they had created using Canva. u3a members are always coming up with innovative ways to promote u3a and it's great to see this in action.

While many u3as may have started winding down for the summer, there are still national opportunities to connect with other members and keep learning. If you are looking for something to do this summer, be sure to check out our national online events – as member Thelma did, who features at the end of the newsletter.

This newsletter is full of evidence of u3a members continuing to develop their skills in retirement. Buxton u3a's Crochet and Knit and Natter groups have decorated their town for summer with granny squares and flowers, creating a sense of summer, even when skies are grey. Meanwhile, the national u3a essay writing competition has highlighted the wealth of knowledge contained in our movement. You can read more about that in the learning section of this newsletter.

I hope you are all having a lovely summer – whether you're taking the time to unwind or jumping into your hobbies even more than before.

With very best wishes

Iain Cassidy

CEO of the Third Age Trust



Introducing the new Chair of *Network Link*

We're delighted to welcome Karen Green as the new Chair of *Network Link*, the structure that supports u3a networks. Karen says, "*Network Link* is a vital forum within u3a. It offers a valuable space for network representatives to discuss shared challenges, celebrate successes, provide mutual support, and explore new ways to support local

u3as. I am genuinely excited about the opportunity to work alongside such a committed and experienced group of people."

Support our runners at the *Great North Run*

We're looking for volunteers to help cheer on our five u3a runners and hand out leaflets at the *Great North Run* on Sunday 7 September 2025. Whether you can spare an hour, or the whole morning, your support will make a huge difference. If you could help, please email communications@u3a.org.uk.



Pictured: Council Representative for the North East Jean Cubbin with u3a volunteers at the 2024 Great North Run.

Last chance to apply to run the *TCS London Marathon*

You have until Friday 8 August to apply to run the *TCS London Marathon* to raise money for the Third Age Trust. This opportunity is open to anyone – so please do share this with family and friends who may be interested. Find out more on [the fundraising pages](#) of the u3a website.



Exploring the rich culture of Africa

The Focus on Africa group at Croydon u3a is dedicated to discovering the continent's varied traditions, food and history.

Group co-leader Grace says, "The atmosphere is always warm and welcoming, with everyone showing respect and making sure each person feels included. So far, we've

enjoyed a variety of activities, including discussions about different cultures, playing games, participating in quizzes, visiting museums, and tasting delicious African cuisines. It's been a fantastic journey of learning and sharing together."

friends news

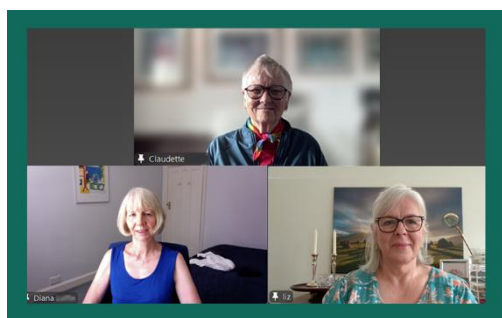
from the Chair, Allan Walmsley

July and August tend to be a quiet period for many u3as as members spend time on holiday or with friends and family. However the Trust, the Board and the Council never sleep. Whilst holidays are obviously a feature of the season, the office remains open and the Trustees and Council Representatives continue their roles and we will all be together for a strategy day towards the end of July.

But the summer period is also an opportunity to try something different. I recently visited Portmeirion for the first time, and even bought a mask of Patrick McGoochan, star of *The Prisoner*, one of my favourite series from the 1960s.

So, if you have the opportunity, try something different this summer. Start a new interest group at your u3a, or join a group and learn new ideas; jazz up your u3a with an new outing or a special speaker; or join in with the summer activities of local community groups. You never know, it may lead to other contacts, new activities or new members. Whatever you are doing, have a great summer.

friends learning



Congratulations to our Essay Competition winner

We're delighted to announce that Claudette, a member of both Porthcawl and Bridgend u3as, has won the first ever u3a Essay Competition. Her essay, *The Spark Behind the Sizzle*, explores the impact of Albert Marsh's invention of nichrome, which powers modern technology including the toaster and the hairdryer.

The two runners-up are Diana of Guildford u3a, with *The Revolutionary Road Traffic Act of 1934*, and Liz of Chester u3a, with *Let's Cut To The Chase!* Read all the shortlisted essays on [the essay writing competition page](#).

Pictured (top to bottom, left to right): Winner Claudette and runners up, Diana and Liz.

friends events

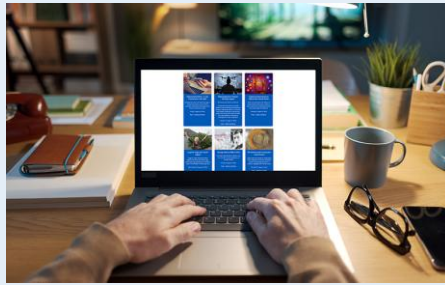
Iconic rocker shares his musical story

We are delighted to invite members and their friends to an exclusive online event with Ian Gillan from iconic rock band *Deep Purple*. On Tuesday 11 September, Ian will be sharing stories from his remarkable life and his career in music. Book your place on [the online events page](#).

Image credit: Bob Mussell.



Enjoy the national u3a community online



Thelma from Luton u3a shares her recent experience trying u3a national online events.

In 2016, I retired after having worked full-time for 45 years and decided to join Luton u3a to ease into my new non-working life. Since joining, I have taken part in several different groups over time including walking, French for beginners, Tai-Chi, Yoga, Ukulele for beginners, Knit & Natter and Members on their own (MOTO).

A little over a year ago, I joined this *u3a Friends newsletter* community as a result of a piece in the Luton u3a newsletter, *InTouch*. I did not actively get involved with any of the activities advertised until quite recently but I'm so pleased I took the plunge. Scrolling through the national u3a events, I was pleasantly surprised at how varied the topics were to meet the interest of a cross-section of members.

A few of the events piqued my interest, so in January this year I registered for a beginners *Mindfulness and Meditation* session. I haven't looked back! I've since attended several talks on different subjects and can honestly say that I'm getting more from my u3a membership.

These online events are ideal for those who find it hard or difficult to attend activities outside of the home, or who are experiencing isolation and loneliness. Joining a u3a online event could improve your knowledge, skills and enhance aspects of your quality of life. Good luck with whatever you decide.

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Headline photos: Members of the *u3a Kent Network* at the *Kent County Show* where they promoted u3a; a knitted banner created by Buxton u3a members to decorate their town; members of East Grinstead u3a visited the Houses of Parliament.