

May 2025

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Introduction from Iain Cassidy

Dear Friends,

Over the last month, I've had the opportunity to meet members at Wokingham u3a's 35th anniversary.

I also attended St Ives Cambridge u3a's open day which was a great event where I both met existing members and people who had come along to find out more about u3a. The Chair, Peter Cooper, is to be commended for putting on such a great and lively meeting – and for looking after me! There were over 300 people through the door on the day.

This newsletter contains stories of some of the other interesting things going on at u3as – from yarnbombing to armchair travel. As always, it's great to hear about the creative ways you are sharing your skills with each other and with your wider communities.

I hope you all have a lovely May. I, for one, am hoping the sun starts shining again – I was loving the good weather.

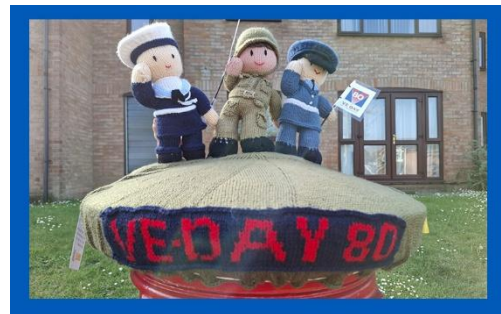
With very best wishes

Iain Cassidy

CEO of the Third Age Trust

Chandlers Ford u3a celebrate VE Day

On Thursday 8 May, the country celebrated 80 days since VE Day. Chandlers Ford u3a's Crafties group had a creative way of marking the anniversary – crafting VE Day themed postbox toppers which were displayed all across the town. A picture of one of their creations was shared in *The Times* on 7 May and an article about the postbox toppers was included in *Chandlers Ford Today*.



Far-flung places: only a presentation away

Swansea u3a's Armchair Travel group get to travel the world, virtually, with members sharing interactive presentations of their holidays. Together, the group have experienced Tasmania, Portugal and India – to name a few.

Group leader Richard says, "I joined u3a in 2012 after I retired. Sometime later I was asked by a member of the Armchair Travel Group to do a talk on Cuba. I joined the group and, in September 2022, took over as group leader and restarted face to face meetings. I am fortunate enough to have a group of well-travelled people who are willing to offer talks."

Member Louise says, "I joined the Armchair Travel group because I like to hear about the travels of other people having travelled a bit myself. I like all virtual travel but I have greatest interest in far flung places, especially where nature and wildlife are included. I can no longer do the sort of holidays I did in the past so listening to the memories of others' travels is an excellent substitute."

Spanish Improvers put their skills to the test

Members of Harborough Welland u3a's Spanish speaking group had the unusual opportunity of putting their language skills to the test when a group of Spanish fans came to their town for a football game. They met and greeted the fans in their native language.



As members of the group expressed, "We don't all get the chance to put our foreign languages theory into practice, so we were fortunate as members of this u3a group to do just that."

Pictured: Spanish footballs fans with members of the Harborough Welland Spanish Improvers Group. Photo taken by Phil Passingham, Harborough Town Football Club photographer.

Tuesday 13 May saw the first formal meeting of the new Board of Directors, and whilst it will take a while for the new members to find their feet, everyone seemed committed to making the new arrangements work.

Key to the Board's success will be its ability to work in tandem with the new u3a Council, and the Council Chair will attend each Board meeting. Ideas about how the Council and Board can work together are already being discussed.

At the same time, Board members are clear about the need to provide oversight and leadership to the movement. This is an ideal opportunity to reset its focus, provide greater clarity on the strategic aims, and ensure that the u3a movement remains a sustainable, attractive and relevant member organisation for many years to come.

Finally, the Board is also committed to transparency in all its actions, and a summary report of the main issues will appear on the u3a website.

friends stories

On 2 April, I celebrated my 66th birthday. What better way to celebrate the day than walking with friends who I have made in Rugby u3a's walking group.

I opted to lead the first of our April walks on my birthday. The walk started and finished in Stanford on Avon.

The walk was completed in utopian weather, my perfect day.

Graham, Rugby u3a



friends media

u3a in the press

Here are some recent highlights of the press coverage about u3a...

- Susan from Swansea u3a's Armchair Travellers group was interviewed in *Best Magazine*. This led to Susan appearing on the *David Lloyd* show on *Boom Radio* on Tuesday 13 May.
- An article about sporting groups within u3a, featuring quotes from u3a pickleball and petanque groups, featured in *London Daily News*, *National World*, *Psychreg*, *Nottingham World*, *Techie Mag* and *Birmingham World*.
- A double page spread in *North Lakes Living* highlighted Penrith and North Lakes u3a, featuring quotes from four members about the positive impact u3a had had on them.

A prescription to join u3a



Upholland u3a member Lance first joined u3a to stay active – both physically and mentally. Eight years on, he talks about how u3a has become a key part of his life.

I was recommended to u3a by the NHS following a Subarachnoid Brain Haemorrhage in 2017 and have never looked back.

The parting words of Counsellors at Walton Hospital were to recommend that I give u3a a try to give me some new direction and keep me active. So when I felt up to it, I tried Upholland u3a. The years since have seen me sign up to numerous groups all of which have proved fulfilling and good fun.

I am Group Leader for the Birdwatching group. I thought why not; without Group Leaders there wouldn't be any groups. I am also on the Steering committee for the Photography Group which organises monthly meetings and trips. We arrange practical sessions for members and share our experiences and expertise to encourage better photographs both aesthetically and technically.

To keep fit, I attend the Local and Social Walks groups which take us off the beaten track in and around local towns and villages. We have recently started going on Walking holidays as a Group and this year will be our third year. Andalucia here we come!!

I don't see a time when u3a won't be part of my life. It can take up as much time as you want, or as little. There is no pressure – that went out of the door on retirement.

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Headline photos: A photo by David of Balsall Common u3a submitted into the u3a learning activity *Found in Nature*; Iain at Wokingham u3a's 35th Anniversary; members of Harborough Welland u3a welcoming Spanish football fans.