

March 2025

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



## Introduction from Iain Cassidy

Dear friends,

I'm pleased to share with you our new film showcasing Croydon u3a's Tai Chi group. It's a great example of how u3a strengthens social connections and boosts wellbeing, which are key to us living better lives as we get older. Please do watch the film and share this within your communities.

Since the last newsletter, I have attended the London Chairs Network, been part of one of our Strategy Implementation Groups around Enjoying Learning, and had a successful away day with u3a office staff. Although each of these groups are different, they are all united by their passion for u3a. It's been great to talk to so many people about the ways that we at the *Third Age Trust* can add value not only to existing members, but to prospective members who could benefit from the u3a community.

At the end of this newsletter, member Jean credits u3a with giving her a new lease of life and applauds the local volunteers at Welwyn Hatfield u3a. Her words remind us of the difference that u3a makes to people's lives and the impact we can all have when we contribute to this movement.

With very best wishes

Iain Cassidy

CEO of the Third Age Trust

### Sharing the calm of Tai Chi

We are delighted to share our new film featuring Croydon u3a's Tai Chi group, which can be watched on [the u3a YouTube channel](#). Members Chris and Paulette talk about the community they have found within u3a and how the group positively impacts their wellbeing. We will be using the film to promote the benefits of joining u3a and it is also available as a resource for u3as who want to recruit new members locally.

This is the final film in *Share Something Brilliant Today*, our series celebrating the things members share within u3a. We would love to hear your stories – have you shared a positive experience, the discovery of a new skill, or a friendship as a result of u3a? Let us know by emailing [communications@u3a.org.uk](mailto:communications@u3a.org.uk).

## **friends news** from the members...

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### Congratulations to Wolverhampton u3a writers

The creative writing group at Wolverhampton u3a have recently published an anthology of short stories titled *More Senior Moments*.

Joint Co-ordinator of the group, Tess, says "We wanted to share our writing with others and to show what can be achieved by older members of the community. The Anthology contains short stories, drama, comedy, poetry and memoir, something to appeal to everyone. Our group has been in existence for about 15 years and we write for learning and for pleasure."



### Showcasing women's experiences

This month is *Women's History Month* and *International Women's Day* was celebrated on Saturday 8 March. It is a time to reflect on the lasting impact women have had on society and the challenges they still face.

Penny is the leader of Wandsworth u3a's Herstory group and says, "Women are often invisible in history books and in any normal history group they will hardly get a look in... I ask members to research women who have come to their attention, living or dead, and to go beyond Wikipedia entries. Last month we looked at Betty Papworth, an East End campaigner, and Sarah Robinson, the soldier's friend. I am particularly keen to avoid defining women by the men around them. The group helps me focus my interest in women's lives and the need to make them more visible."

Dulwich & District u3a have a Women's Studies group. Leader Sandra says, "I have learnt much from this group about so many aspects of women's lives and the characters who have impacted my life in the 21st century. I have also made many new friends. I would encourage any female u3a member to join or set up a women's studies group."

It's all change on the u3a Board.

Current Board Trustees will gather for their final meeting on 26 March, and for some, it will be the end of a lengthy term serving the movement as a committed Trustee. Most Trustees will transition automatically to the new u3a Council and, together with a number of new Council representatives, they will meet face to face as a Council for the first time on 8 April.

In the meantime, the new Board Trustees will meet together face to face on 27 March, both to get to know each other and to better understand their future role. So everything seems set for the big changeover effective from 1 April.

We are now at the threshold of major changes and I'd like to thank everyone that's helped to get us this far. The next steps are very much in the hands of the members you have elected and I hope they all share my excitement about the future. Fingers crossed!

## friends events

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### Enter our first national u3a essay competition

Submissions for our inaugural essay competition are now open to all u3a members. The essay must "make the case for a person, policy, invention, or idea having a positive impact on society." Whether your interest is Science, History, English Literature or something completely different, we would love to hear your take on the essay question. The essays must be under 1,000 words and the deadline is Friday 9 May. Find out more and submit your essay on [the learning pages](#).



### Celebrating five years and 1,000 maths challenges

The *u3a Maths Challenge* is celebrating its fifth birthday, with the team having created 1,000 puzzles. Thank you to the hard working team: David, Ray, Rod, Ian and the u3a Maths and Stats Subject Adviser, David. Annie has recently joined the group and Janine Aldridge manages the activity at u3a office.

Celebrate the team's achievement and test your mathematical skills by trying one of their maths challenges on [the learning pages](#). There's a taster question below – the answer is on page 5 of this newsletter.

Ascenda and Boreville are neighbouring towns. The population of Ascenda is currently 50,000 and is increasing at a rate of 1,200 people per year. The population of Boreville is currently 70,000 and is decreasing at a rate of 800 people per year. Assuming these rates remain constant, in how many years will the populations of the two towns be equal.

## A new lease of life due to learning



Jean is a member of Welwyn Hatfield u3a and *Interest Groups Online*. She talks about how it has changed her life.

I discovered u3a three years ago when I saw a poster for Welwyn Hatfield u3a at the local library and thought I'd give it a try. I then ended up joining online quiz and mindfulness and poetry groups through *Interest Groups Online*.

I have learned a multitude of new things. I have improved at *Scrabble* – previously I only played at Christmas with the family and now play at the local weekly group. Seven letter words still elude me! Doing mindfulness and poetry online has greatly influenced my thoughts, feelings and emotions all for the better. It has helped me to relax, appreciate nature and – of course – poetry, which I have also started to write.

I learn something new at our weekly local meetings, from how police dogs are trained to what happened to musician Glenn Miller, declared missing in action in the Second World War.

I also tune into online learning events. I've listened to talks about Frida Kahlo, penguins and AI. The best part of being a u3a member is the constant learning – always something new.

I have met many new and interesting people at the group meetings and have also made some good friends through *Scrabble*. The efforts that u3a volunteers put into providing things for us is outstanding. That aspect of u3a has made me realise there are a lot of selfless people in the world. All in all, u3a has given me happiness, hope and I'm sure, better health. Thank you u3a for a new lease of life at the age of 77.

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Headline photos: Wolverhampton u3a creative writing group with their short story anthology; a still from our new film showcasing Croydon u3a's Tai Chi group; the team behind the *u3a Maths Challenge*.

Answer to Maths puzzle: 10 years.

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