

Nottinghamshire Network of u3as

AUGUST 2025

## MESSAGE FROM CHRIS NIVEN, CHAIR OF THE NOTTS NETWORK

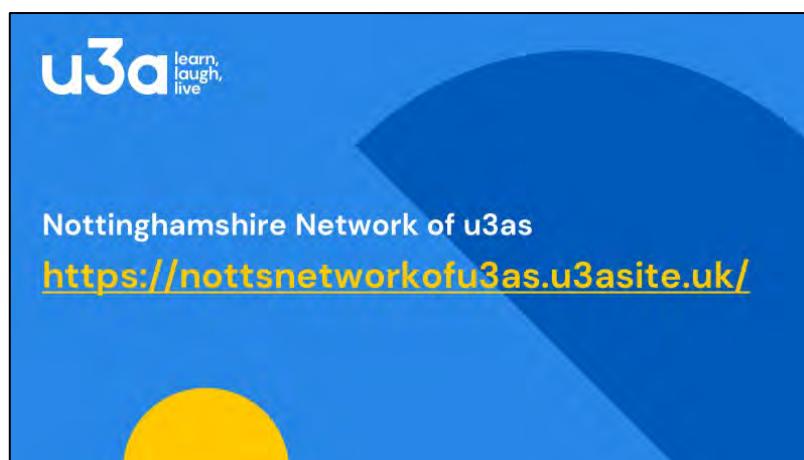
Dear Members,

I hope you have all had the opportunity to enjoy the lovely weather we have had recently. Although, as I sit writing this, it is raining and the garden is finally receiving some much-needed water.

As my time as Chair comes to an end, I have been reflecting on the past two years and the many activities and events that have taken place. I am so proud to have been part of these projects and to have worked alongside such an energetic and innovative committee. While some neighbouring Networks are struggling, and even folding, our Network remains busy, active, supportive, and thriving.

Enjoy the rest of the summer, whatever you may be doing, and happy reading of *Newsbites*. Here you will find a flavour of some of the activities other groups have been enjoying, as well as ideas to inspire your own u3a.

Best wishes  
Chris



## DUKERIES u3a

This consistently hot, dry and windy weather brings much joy to some, but misery for others – especially those who suffer with hay fever which, I gather, has been especially virulent this summer. Not to be deterred, members of the Dukeries u3a have been making excellent use of the fine weather, getting out and about, learning new skills, exercising body and mind ... or just relishing the delights of company!

The All Sorts Crafts and Gardening Group were entertained by Sue North to a demonstration of 'Flowers in a Teacup' – and then produced their own mini displays. Our WhatsApp Walkers use mostly local trails of some 3-4 miles and, at the end of May, enjoyed a circular ramble, starting and finishing at Reg Taylor's nursery near Southwell.



Under the enthusiastic leadership of Paul Webb, the Tennis, Badminton, Pickleball, Boule and Frisbee Group goes from strength to strength. Pickleball – a racket or 'paddle' sport akin to Tennis – is proving especially popular, and Paul likes to mix it up with Soft Tennis and Badminton. These really are great activities to get all the muscles working!

Elsewhere, the Tuesday and Sunday Lunch Clubs continue to attract keen diners who enjoy the company, putting the world to rights or just having a chat. Maria Pitrolino and Beryl Lee are the hosts who carefully select local dining venues which are accessible to all. A very civilised way of spending a lunchtime.

Mike Mounsey

Nottinghamshire Network of u3as

<https://nottsnetworkofu3as.u3asite.uk/>

## RETFORD u3a

### RETFORD U3A CELEBRATING 15 GREAT YEARS

An afternoon event was held to celebrate our 15 year anniversary. On a beautiful June day members attended the West Retford Hotel to enjoy being entertained by the Worksop u3a Swing Band. We were pleased to be able to welcome two founder members. Some members entered a Best Hat and Best Buttonhole competition, the winners are pictured. To add to the sense of nostalgia we were served local strawberries and Pimms.





Additionally, in addition our Chair, Pippa Ramsay was able to announce that one of our members, Pat Trotter, had been awarded the British Empire Medal. What an achievement, well done Pat!

Pat Lockett  
Vice Chair

## WEST BRIDGFORD u3a

August is here, that month of airport queues, factor 50 and looking after grandchildren who are on their summer break from school.

At West Bridgford, most of our groups do not meet during August. This is a pragmatic decision based on the likely low attendance.

For some members, however, this means that they miss out on the regular social contact with friends that the groups provide.

To try and fill this gap, we organise extra weekly sessions during August that any member can attend.

While loosely based on an activity (table tennis, board games, quiz, singing) each also acts as a drop-in centre where any member can call in for a chat and a cup of tea.

These have worked well and provide many opportunities for a chat and a laugh.

John Tidmarsh  
Membership Secretary

## EDWALTON & DISTRICT u3a

On 18 July Geoff Ellis led our five mile walk which was largely around the banks of the River Soar but also visiting Hathern. We met at the pub where we parked up. We then walked through the countryside, but keeping a close eye on our walk leader, as at one point he disappeared through a gate hidden in the hedge. We saw cows drinking at the riverside. We also saw the Weir.



At the end of the walk we ended up on the opposite bank to the pub. Geoff had arranged for the chain ferry to be operated for us specially, so that we could experience this unique form of transport. As you will see from the pictures we were split into two groups to go across. Due to the nature of the ferry we could only sit on the one side, as the chain operates on the other side. This did make the ferry look a bit lop sided, but we all made it safely to the other side of the river. We then adjourned to the Plough Inn and had a very enjoyable lunch by the riverside.



Martin Holden  
Treasurer

## MANSFIELD u3a

### Wing Walk Flight

A huge congratulations to Phil Oliver, who recently completed a thrilling wing walk flight in support of the John Eastwood Hospice.

Phil's courage and commitment to such a daring challenge is truly inspiring, and we're proud and delighted to support him — especially as he's still smiling after the experience!

To show our appreciation and help boost his fundraising efforts, we will be donating half of the proceeds from our upcoming Silent Auction to the hospice.



### History Group visit to Leicester

Members enjoyed a fascinating day exploring the life and legacy of King Richard III. Our visit began at Leicester Cathedral, where Richard's remains were respectfully reinterred in 2015.



We then visited the King Richard III Visitor Centre in Leicester, where we learned about the dramatic events of his reign, his death at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485, and the extraordinary archaeological work that led to the discovery of his remains beneath a city car park over 500 years later.

In the afternoon, we travelled to the Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre in rural Leicestershire for a guided walk across the battlefield.

### Darlington Gliding Club

Adventurous members recently channelled their inner "Top Guns" with a thrilling

visit to Darlton Gliding Club near Tuxford.

Warmly welcomed by the club's experienced pilots, members were introduced to the basics before taking to the air in two-seater gliders. For many, it was their first-ever gliding experience – made even more exciting by the opportunity to take the controls under expert supervision.



There was plenty of time to chat in the sunshine, and enjoy a well-deserved picnic on the ground.

A big thank you to Darlton Gliding Club for their warm hospitality and professionalism, and to Dave Drew for organising this unforgettable experience.

Bill and Carole Harrison  
Publicity Officers

### EASTWOOD & DISTRICT u3a

We were due to have a stand at the Eastwood Festival on 6<sup>th</sup> July, but unfortunately the event was cancelled due to bad weather. However, we were still able to proceed with the "best dressed wheelbarrow" entry, although it was judged online! The pictures were duly sent to the organisers and our u3a came 3<sup>rd</sup> and won £10.00. A good result and as you can see from the photos it was a fantastic entry. Well done to the Gardening Group team for such a beautiful display.



Anne Steel  
Vice Chairman



## RAINWORTH & DISTRICT u3a

Rainworth & District u3a held their AGM in June and Officers were elected for the forthcoming year. On the same day members enjoyed a talk from Dr. Katie Owen on Science. We were encouraged to complete an experiment using a strawberry and various liquids to extract DNA after which we were told strawberries have more DNA than humans.



A new activity group has been started, Canasta, led by Enid Thomas and is proving popular. They meet along with the indoor games/activities groups on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month.

The Strollers eventually had fine weather to visit the Halifax Bomber Memorial site in Farnsfield. The memorial was erected in memory of seven RAF officers who were killed when their plane crashed in Farnsfield on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1944. It is well worth a visit.



Once again several members enjoyed a trip on the Nottingham Princess for a lunchtime cruise on the river Trent. A lovely lunch was served, chicken breast or roast pork followed by Black Forest gateau. The bar was open before and after lunch for drinks to be purchased.

The armchair film club continues to get good support and recently watched The Glen Miller story which was provided by one of

the members. Our local luncheon group 2 enjoyed visits to The Golden Eagle and the Archer.

The local history group visited The Museum of the Horse at Tuxford. Sally Mitchell was their host and introduced them to a curiosity quiz. We won't give details or answers as other u3a groups may make a visit themselves!! Visits to Sherwood Observatory, Southwell Minster and Papplewick Pumping Station are planned in the coming months.

Jackie Massey

## ASHFIELD u3a

Over the last two months Ashfield u3a's groups have all been busy as usual. We had a trip to Wightwick Manor, a National Trust property and are looking forward to visiting Packwood House during August.



There have been two canal trips, on the Cromford Canal and also the Chesterfield Canal, both of which were enjoyed by everyone who attended.

There are upcoming trips to Newstead Abbey and Newark Antique and Collectors Market with the Happy Days group and to Stamford and Veolia Recycling Centre with the Miscellany Group. Also planned is an outing to the Greyhound Races.

Our very popular Curling Group has expanded to two groups so there is now room for new members. Our Ukulele group has been happily practising, there is always room for you to come and try it out.



Our Family and Social History group have been researching family holidays. Most members had holiday snaps to bring, remembering travelling by train, motorbike and sidecar and occasionally by car when

they had to get out of the car to enable it to climb hills. There was a lively discussion about members memories of their own holidays, which progressed to camping and travelling further afield.

The Classical Music group is now up and running again after a short break and is welcoming new members and the Knit and Natter group have very kindly been knitting children's hats for the National Police Aid Charity. Our walking groups have

been making the most of the wonderful weather and we have a new group – STEAM.  
Any guesses?

Wendy Walker

## NEWARK & DISTRICT u3a

Newark & District u3a members always enjoy the monthly meetings, which gives everyone the chance to chat and catch up over tea, coffee and cakes, as well as enjoying a presentation by a Guest Speaker.



At a recent meeting, we were thrilled to be able to welcome along Professor Jonathan Van-Tam as our guest speaker. Prof. Van-Tam served as the Deputy Chief Medical Officer during the Covid Pandemic and members were enthralled by his highly informative and sometimes harrowing account of life in the front line during the battle against Covid.

At one point, you could almost hear a pin drop in the hall as he recounted the threats that had been made to both him and his family during those trying times. After his presentation, we were delighted that Prof. Van-Tam was able to stay and join us for refreshments, during which time he was happy to answer any questions members had.

At the end of the afternoon, we left with a feeling of immense gratitude for the work carried out by Prof. Van-Tam and his team and captivated by this charming man, whose sparkling wit and quiet manner have made him a very hard act to follow.

Maggie George  
Chairman

## KEYWORTH u3a

One of the highlights from the Keyworth Show on 5<sup>th</sup> July was seeing a WWII Hurricane flying over the showground. "Where did it come from, and how was the display arranged?" you may ask.

The plane is one of the aircraft from the 'Battle of Britain Memorial Flight' (BBMF) based at RAF Coningsby, and our u3a member Tony Broadbent is an accredited guide there. In May Tony gave a small group of u3a members a tour of the centre, which is housed in a hangar on the RAF base.

BBMF commemorates the women and men of the RAF who lost their lives in WWII, and was initially set up in 1957. There are eleven historic aircraft kept in flying condition including six Spitfires, two Hurricanes, a Dokotoa and an Avro Lancaster – the latter is one of only two flying in the world today. One of the Spitfires actually took part in the Battle of Britain, and is the last one from the Battle still in flying condition.

Besides showing us the available BBMF planes at the centre, Tony has built up an incredible knowledge of WWII aircraft in general, and our group came away with a much heightened appreciation of the role played by these machines and, even more so, by the personnel who flew them.

BBMF accepts requests from any event organiser for a flypast. Success depends on the day's schedule and location, and Keyworth on 5<sup>th</sup> July was in the right zone at the right time!

Harrie Cooke

## STAPLEFORD & DISTRICT u3a

In August we celebrated our tenth anniversary. The Committee marked the event with u3a colour themed decorations and celebratory cakes.

Slightly disrupted during Covid, when we held meetings via the internet, our numbers have remained about right for our venues' capacity.

Our August speaker, John Shaw, in relating the course of a historic and unconventional battle at Tel El Kabir in 1882, revealed how time can embroider a family's understanding of their ancestors, only to have the rather disappointing truth revealed through assiduous research.

At our July AGM, we appointed a new Treasurer, Alan Tennant, who took over from Janet Cross (Treasurer since the branch was founded). Fortunately, Janet remains a Committee member. Afterwards Stephen Flinders circulated items from his "Old Curiosity Box", challenging members to identify them.

All items were once in common use, but few were recognised. There are two more boxes for future challenges...

Our Gardening Group recently visited Long Eaton Trent College Arboretum where many unusual trees flourish. The College also supports tree planting at two African schools. This Group's leader, Anne Wilson, is not able to continue and members are devising a plan for the future.



Family History have had difficulties with IT connection at Stapleford Library but the Book Club meets there and have discussed the "Transcendent Kingdom" by Yaa Gyasi. Verdict - recommended but challenging. Local History recently considered local pub names - without visiting a single one.

The popular Walking Group is lucky to have Bramcote Park and several canal routes "on the doorstep", their July walk taking in areas of both.

Musicians - singers and ukulele players - meet regularly and perform to other organisations occasionally. Our chair-based groups also flourish: Craft, Scrabble, Rummikub, IT, Art, Quiz - all reflect the aims of the u3a.

Marion Edwards



## FOREST TOWN & DISTRICT u3a

What a busy Summer we have had at Forest Town & District u3a.

At our first event 61 members set off for a day at Whitby where some climbed the 99 steps to the Church and Abbey, others had a paddle in the sea and of course we all enjoyed our fish & chips at various locations, Magpie's, Angel's or just sat on the quayside.

Next came our 3<sup>rd</sup> Summer Ball with a Caribbean theme.



Workshop u3a's Steel Band opened the night, cocktails were served to guests on arrival by our own mixologists and friends from Mansfield, Dukeries and Warsop u3as joined us to dance the night away to 60's and 70's group Spirit.



And finally, our Picnic in the Park. Members gathered at Rufford Park to spend an afternoon having fun and laughter competing (and I do mean competing) in an egg and spoon race, wellie throwing, rounders and pétanque.



Kathryn Cope

## ARNOLD u3a

A first for Arnold u3a – A first for everyone

We've invented a new sport!

I started playing bowls about ten years ago and loved it – I still do. When I joined Arnold u3a, I wanted to share this passion with my new friends but discovered there might be a problem. Bowling every bowl is becoming a huge effort for me and I wondered how many of our u3a members would manage to propel a bowl from one side of the bowling green to the other.



Arnold u3a has a thriving group who play indoor Short Mat Bowls which is certainly less of an effort than Lawn Green Bowls. The lure of the open air in the summer

months made me work at finding a way to form an outdoor group for our u3a.

I couldn't have succeeded without the support of friends at Daybrook Bowls Club, who helped me to get the playing formula right for our new sport at their ground. The secret is that we play only half the length of the green! It's so much easier to bowl but still has the skill needed to make a great competitive game and that certainly suits our members. One of our stars each week is Muriel. She regularly wins her matches and she's over 90 years young.

The Short Lawn Bowls (SLB) group started last year and has offered many happy hours of playing in the sunshine – some of the time – to both our u3a members and to some Daybrook Bowls Club players. Another benefit is that we've been able to invite players from Mapperley u3a to join our sessions. We're nearing the end of the bowls season now but next year, when the season starts in April, I'd love to spread the word wider and find new members from other local u3as.

To our great excitement, we are in the process of getting our new sport, together with the newly conceived rules of SLB, accepted by the Bowls Federation. I look forward to the time when many u3as will be able to form their own SLB groups – using our model – and help will be given to those who ask for it.

Hazel Ward



### RAVENSHEAD u3a

Whilst summertime normally means that activities at Ravenshead u3a tail off a little, it's also the case that groups and activities which thrive in decent summer weather have a surge in participation.

Our new Strollers Group, focusing on shorter walks than our previous walking group, kicked off with a shaded stroll around Burnt Stump Country Park in the fierce heat of one of those summer heatwave days. Members of the group concluded their stroll in the garden of the Burnt Stump Inn with social time and cold drinks.

Other members enjoying a day out during August were our Antiques Group. They headed out early to Lincoln via Tuxford and Dunham Bridge, taking a last glimpse of the eight Cottam Power Station cooling towers, prior to their demolition at 11 a.m. that same day.



After attending a live auction at Golding Young Auctioneers for a couple of hours, with Group Leader John Butler winning a couple of lots, they then visited Lincoln Antiques Centre to peruse the offerings there, followed by a visit to the fascinating Lincolnshire Road Transport Museum, and finally a meal out at the Swan Holme Restaurant.

Proving exceedingly popular during July and August were six separate day trips to the Chesterfield Canal Trust at the Hollingwood Hub, where a maximum of 12 members on each boat trip took a ride along the Chesterfield Canal on "Madeline", a canal boat purpose built by Eckington School and launched in 2014, which the Trust bought from the school in 2020.



On Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., we will again be celebrating our u3a Day in Ravenshead Village Hall, when display stands for all our Interest Groups will demonstrate to the general public the benefits of u3a membership.

John Butler  
Chair

**u3a** learn, laugh, live **Ravenshead u3a 2026 Coach Holiday**

**Alfa Travel Coach  
Holiday to Tenby**

**5 days/4 nights at the  
Cliffe Norton Hotel**

**2 day excursions out to :  
St David's & Saundersfoot**

**Leaves 25th April 2026**

**£375 per person**

£50pp deposit payable now

Text Halinka Rajchel (Ru3a Trips & Holidays  
organiser) on 07762 802112 to Book



**u3a** learn, laugh, live **Ravenshead u3a 2026 Coach Holiday**

**Alfa Travel Coach  
Holiday to Cromer**

**5 days/4 nights at the  
Hotel de Paris**

**2 day excursions to :  
Sandringham / Broads Cruise**

**Leaves 12<sup>th</sup> September 2026**

**£459 per person**

£50pp deposit payable now

Text Halinka Rajchel (Ru3a Trips & Holidays  
organiser) on 07762 802112 to Book



# Ashfield u3a Miscellany Group Trip

## Day Trip to Stamford (Lincolnshire)

**Friday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

The cost is **£15** for the coach plus an extra **£10** if you want to join a 90 minute long walking tour of the town starting at 2pm.

Trip leaves the Kirkby at 9am and also picks up Ravenshead u3a members at the southbound bus stop at Newstead Abbey Gates

Contact Sue Taylor on **07791 425094**  
or by email : **taylor07vic@gmail.com**



## GUIDELINES FOR ARTICLES TO NEWSBITES

We will be particularly pleased to receive articles about any unusual or exceptional event that your u3a may have organised or any new activity that your u3a is running. u3as learn from each other and it is very useful for their members to read about new events or activities that they haven't come across before.

- Please send your text in Word format and keep to a maximum 300-word count.
- Please submit photos as separate attachments in formats JPG, JPEG, PNG or similar (not pdf). They must be of good quality and a minimum of 1MB. No collages please.
- Please ensure there are no copyright issues and that all who feature in your photos have expressed their consent for the photos to appear in Newsbites and on u3a and Network websites.
- Please let me have the name of the author of your article and his/her status e.g. member, group leader, chair etc. I do look on your websites but don't always manage to find a full name or status.

Many thanks

Maria Gabrielczyk – Editor

[maria.newsbytes@gmail.com](mailto:maria.newsbytes@gmail.com)

## DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF NEWSBITES

Please send your articles (keep to a maximum 300-word count)  
and good quality photos (as attachments please)  
by 7<sup>th</sup> October 2025 to [maria.newsbytes@gmail.com](mailto:maria.newsbytes@gmail.com)