

MESSAGE FROM JOHN BUTLER, CHAIR OF THE NOTTS NETWORK

Hello everyone,

Before joining the Notts Network Committee – and becoming Chair on the same day – I had long been involved with the Network on a voluntary, non-committee basis, acting as Social Media Coordinator, a role I continue alongside my responsibilities as Chair. This involves daily monitoring of social media posts from each Nottinghamshire u3a with a presence on Facebook, helping me to understand what is happening locally within those u3as that regularly share their activities.

We know that not every member wishes to take on a volunteering role to support their local u3a or the wider network. However, volunteering has been a key component in the growth of the u3a movement over the past 44 years.

What we are now observing, as new members join in increasing numbers, is that each generation brings its own perspectives and approaches to volunteering. While the WWII “Silent Generation” and the post-war “Baby Boomer” generation were often shaped by a strong tradition of volunteering, many in “Generation X”, who are now joining us, may engage in ways that reflect different priorities and commitments.

Encouraging participation in volunteering was a key focus for those who attended the East Midlands Regional Training Conference at Braunstone, near Leicester, in mid-March. This highly successful event, funded by the Trust and facilitated by Susannah Hodge, Head of Learning and Volunteering at the Trust Office, explored ways to make volunteering more attractive and rewarding.

One approach discussed was the creation of STAR (Special Tasks and Resources) and RUG (Really Useful Group) teams. While these were not terms I had previously been familiar with, they were described as flexible, short-term volunteering structures within a u3a. Their purpose is to support the running of local u3as without requiring long-term or rigid commitments, helping to “spread the load” beyond the main committee and making volunteering more accessible by breaking tasks into manageable, bite-size, often ad hoc contributions.

If you are one of these volunteers, thank you for going above and beyond in support of your u3a.

Best wishes,

John

Nottinghamshire Network of u3as

INTEREST GROUPS MATTER 2

Do you lead an interest group? Are you a groups co-ordinator?
Are you a sports group leader? Are you a u3a web manager?

**We welcome any member of the Notts Network to
this face-to-face workshop**

Find out more and join our exciting workshop on
Monday 1 June 2026 – 9.45 a.m. until 12.45 p.m.
at the Newstead Community Centre
Tilford Road, Newstead Village, NG15 0BS



Programme:

- **Presentation: Keeping interest groups vibrant – looking to the future**
- **Breakout groups**
 - Sports
 - Trips and visits
 - Interest Groups co-ordinators
 - Web managers
 - General – will interest those who do not fit one of the groups above

If you would like to join us please contact Margot Gale by Monday 18 May 2026 giving your full name, email address, your u3a and preferred break out group: margot.nottsnetwork@outlook.com
Cost £5 per member payable in cash on the day – your u3a may be able to sponsor you. Learn, laugh, live

u3a Festival in Sherwood Forest

Wednesday June 17 2026

**Visitors Centre,
Edwinstowe, NG21 9RN**

10.30am-3.00pm

A free event open to all.

**Join us for games, musical performances
and guided walks.**

Cafe on site or bring your own picnic.

**For a fun filled day of entertainment,
great company and plenty of spaces to unwind and
enjoy the beauty of nature together.**

**Please visit the Arts and Crafts Centre
and RSPB Gift Shop.**

u3a

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u3a

North Notts Neighbourhood Group

**Ashfield, Bolsover, Dukeries, Forest Town, Mansfield, Rainworth,
Retford, Sherwood, Sutton, Warsop and Worksop**

Enquiries: slhu3a@gmail.com www.rspb.org.uk



**All Day Car Parking £7
Free to RSPB Members**



Mansfield u3a and several other local u3as, who form the North Notts Neighbourhood Group, are holding a Festival in Sherwood Forest and would love other u3as to come and enjoy the day with them.

Carole and Bill Harrison
Publicity Officers
Mansfield u3a

NEWS FROM THE EAST MIDLANDS

It's all change at the u3a Council

One year ago, a new structure was set up for the running of the Third Age Trust, the overarching body of the u3a. This incorporated a Board and a Council.

The Council's role is to act as a link between the Board and u3as with two Council Representatives elected by u3as in each of the twelve regions and nations, it is their responsibility to engage with and listen to the views of members in their region or nation and take ideas or proposed changes from the membership to be discussed and acted upon at a national level.



Here in the East Midlands, we have been represented on the Council by John Lewis who has acted on his own for much of the year. We would like to express our grateful thanks to him for all he has done and wish him well for the future.

An election was held for the two Council Representative positions which resulted in John Butler from Ravenshead u3a and Rosie Allen from Arnold u3a being elected for a three year term, starting from 1st April.

We are now your representatives, so please feel free to contact us about any ideas or issues you have.

We are also happy to be invited to visit your u3a and will attend the Notts Network meetings and those of the East Midlands Region.

Many thanks for your support.

John Butler

John.Butler@u3a.org.uk

Rosie Allen

Rosie.Allen@u3a.org.uk



HUCKNALL & DISTRICT u3a

Our seven-day trip to Ilfracombe on the North Devon coast was a memorable holiday, with beautiful scenery, enjoyable walks, and interesting outings. The weather was mostly good, allowing us to make the most of each day.



Clovelly

A highlight was visiting the historic village of Dunster, with its attractive streets and impressive castle, following a scenic drive across Exmoor's open moorland and rolling hills.

Walking featured strongly: we completed a 6.5-mile walk along Woolacombe Beach and a rewarding coastal walk from Ilfracombe to Combe Martin, both offering stunning views.

We also visited Barnstaple for shopping, toured the Dartington Glass Factory to see skilled craftsmen at work, and explored

Bideford and the steep, picturesque streets of Clovelly.

Evenings were filled with entertainment and fun, ending with a lively fancy-dress night enjoyed by all.



Ilfracombe



Mark Thornley

BINGHAM u3a

Bingham u3a – in what is our 25th year – welcomed u3a Trust Chair Allan Walmsley to its March meeting. Allan was visiting Nottinghamshire in advance of the East Midlands regional event, and joined our discussion to find out more about Bingham u3a, as well as to talk about the recruitment of new members and developments at the Third Age Trust. There was a lively exchange followed by a photo call – taken in what was the courtroom (now the Town Council meeting room) of the Old Court House in Bingham where we hold our committee meetings.

We will continue our 25th anniversary celebrations on June 14th with a Party in the Park (at Bingham Rugby Club) featuring the band Strawberry Jammers.



John Perry

STAPLEFORD & DISTRICT u3a

In March, Stapleford members enjoyed the music of Anglers' Mates, a tribute duo to Fisherman's Friends, and met "Rag, Tag and Bobtail" from a local Morsbags group – a worldwide network of volunteers, founded in 2007 by Claire Morsman, who transform unwanted fabrics into reusable shopping bags. They have given away over 200,000 bags,



saving millions of plastic bags from going into landfill. More information is available at morsbags.com.

In April, our member Davey Jones explored military ingenuity in adapting rolling stock, bringing along his extraordinary collection of hand-made models. Among them was the McKinley Cruiser, built to run on tram tracks in 1896 in anticipation of riots in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. Never seaworthy, it was later placed in a local lake as a tourist attraction and was eventually set on fire in 1908.



Marion Edwards
Secretary

RAINWORTH & DISTRICT u3a

At a recent meeting of Rainworth and District u3a, we were pleased to welcome the Chair of Newark and Sherwood District Council, Linda Tift, and the Sheriff of Nottingham, Richard Townsley, who joined us to present a plaque marking the village's place within the Sherwood Forest area.

It has been agreed that a plaque will be placed in each village of the former forest. Following discussions with the Sheriff and local MP Michelle Walsh, 20 February was chosen as Sherwood Forest Day, as it is the birthday of Major Hayman Rooke, after whom the Major Oak is named.



The plaque was received by Diane Hibbert, leader of the u3a local history group, and Tanya Villa, Manager of Rainworth Village Hall, together with her assistant, Olivia Bradbury. It is now on display in Rainworth Village Hall.

Jackie Massey

BEESTON u3a

A fabulous morning of nostalgia and entertainment was delivered by local artist and musician Paul Lillie, whose unique blend of art and music supports patient wellbeing at Nottingham City Hospital as part of its award-winning Arts programme.

Accompanying himself on guitar, Paul performed well-loved songs with enthusiastic audience participation, while painting portraits live as he traced the evolution of popular music—from Elvis and Buddy Holly to The Beatles, Motown, and beyond into punk, reggae, disco and stadium music. His artwork brought iconic figures vividly to life, including Elvis, Buddy, John, Paul, Aretha and Bob.



This memorable event marked the culmination of Karen Attwood's tenure as speaker organiser and publicity officer. She leaves on a high, following this and many other excellent talks. Our thanks to Karen for her enthusiasm, humour and dedication.

Dee May
Communications Officer

FOREST TOWN & DISTRICT u3a

Fifty-four members of Forest Town u3a set off early one morning for a memorable trip to the Cairngorms, travelling through stunning scenery of snow-capped mountains, waterfalls and countless lochs.

Our varied itinerary included a visit to the Commando Memorial at Spean Bridge, a moving tribute to courage and sacrifice. Although high winds closed the Ben Nevis gondolas, we travelled by funicular to the Ptarmigan Station, where we were rewarded with spectacular views.

A scenic rail journey from Fort William to Mallaig took us over the famous Glenfinnan Viaduct. We also enjoyed a visit to the Red Deer Centre, where we could feed, stroke and photograph these magnificent animals, followed by time in Pitlochry.

On our final evening, we were piped into a candlelit dining room for a traditional Scottish meal, followed by a lively ceilidh.





A wonderful holiday shared with friends – full of discovery, laughter and great memories.

Kathryn Cope
Chair



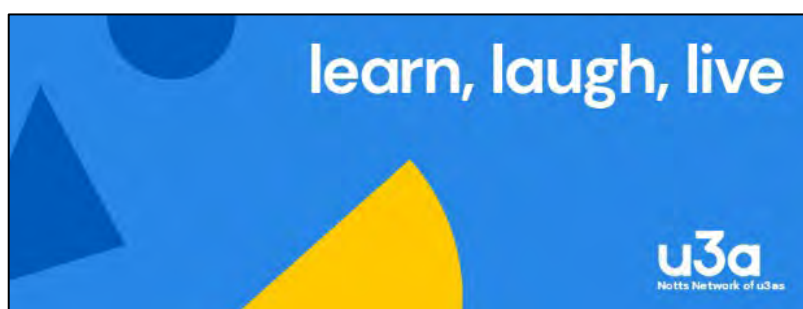
WOLLATON u3a

Our first three speakers this year have been tremendous – and wonderfully diverse: January brought the story of King Richard III, whose remains were discovered beneath a car park in Leicester. Following an extensive search for evidence and descendants, he was finally laid to rest in Leicester Cathedral after lying in state for three days.

In February, Professor Sara Goodacre captivated us with her presentation on spiders. Did you know they can fly and even sail on water? Her research at the University of Nottingham's Spider Lab has led to the development of artificial spider silk, now being used to support healing in hospital patients.

As if that wasn't enough, March transported us into the world of fake news and uncertainty, as Colin Harrison explored artificial intelligence and its impact on everyday life – from fake adverts to self-driving cars. We were left asking: how does it help, and how might it hinder?

Ann Marshall
Vice Chair



ASHFIELD u3a

On 26 March, Ashfield u3a celebrated its 20th anniversary with a joyful and well-attended event. Proceedings began with a cake cutting by founding member and first Chairman, Barrie Jackson, followed by a toast to both the past and future of the organisation. The beautifully decorated cake was created by the Sugar Craft Group.



The meeting was opened to the public, offering visitors the chance to enjoy coffee and cake while exploring a range of group activities. Demonstration tables showcased everything from Threads and Fibres to Pickleball, Curling, Miscellany Visits and National Trust outings. A highlight was a fashion show featuring members modelling their own dressmaking creations.

To mark the occasion, groups contributed squares to a commemorative quilt, expertly assembled by founder member Lynne Jackson.

With more celebrations planned, Ashfield u3a looks forward to continuing to "Learn, Laugh and Live."

Wendy Walker
Vice Chair



RAVENSHEAD u3a

In his annual report to Ru3a members for our 2026 AGM in April, outgoing Chair, John Butler, highlights that six new interest groups were formed in 2025 : Strollers, Arts Appreciation, Living Well, Fashion, Hearts (card game) and a second Food & Cookery Group.

It was this Food & Cookery Group that travelled to Wakefield in February for a day out at the annual Rhubarb Festival.

After perusing the various stalls, sampling some of the offerings and making their rhubarb related purchases, they then headed to the Bridge Inn near the Hepworth Gallery for a super pub lunch before returning home loaded with their goodies to consume at their leisure.

The group's March theme for a home "fuddle" was "Welsh Delicacies", in honour of St David's Day on 1st March, and in April the food contributions will be inspired by "My Favourite Chef".



Sue Butler



EASTWOOD u3a

Art Appreciation – February

We had a lovely morning discussing the art of photography with two of our own. Ernie and Les from the Photography group joined us bringing fine examples of their work. There were some very impressive pieces of art and we were very impressed with the quality of photos made just using mobile phones. They patiently answered lots of questions. We wanted to know what inspired them, how many they took to get a good one, what made a good photograph, what equipment they used and lots more.

We then shared our own photos from family snapshots to more professional and meaningful images.

Many thanks to Ernie and Les for taking time out from their snapping to share their skills and enthusiasm.

Anne Steel
Chair

DUKERIES u3a

One of the highlights of this spring so far has been the Jugs Jamboree at the John Fretwell Centre, where ukulele players from far and wide joined the Dukeries Jubilee Ukulele Group for an enthusiastic performance from the Jamboree songbook.

The day also featured an open mic session showcasing soloists and small groups. In total, £1,300 was raised for the John Fretwell Complex and John Eastwood Hospice.



At the Jubilee Hall, we enjoyed a successful Irish Social Night. It was a colourful evening, with splendid costumes, hats and beards celebrating the Emerald Isle. A varied programme of entertainment culminated in a lively paper aeroplane competition!



Meanwhile, the Ramblers marked St Patrick's Day with a walk around the Derwent Dams in (almost) balmy weather. Sadly, attempts to play the Dambusters theme at Ladybower Dam were unsuccessful due to a lack of mobile signal!

Mike Mounsey
Chair

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF NEWSBITES
Please send your articles (keep to a maximum 150 word count)
and good quality photos (as attachments please)
by 7th June 2026 to maria.newsbitess@gmail.com