

# Upton and Lytchett u3a

## Newsletter September 2025

**Welcome to our new u3a year.** To those of you who have renewed your membership we thank you for your continued support – and to our new members we extend a very warm welcome to you. We hope you all have an interesting year.

Sometimes we are asked ‘**What is u3a and what does it offer?**’ Many of our established members can skip this bit – because you already know – but for those of you who are unsure here is a quick explanation.

Upton and Lytchett U3A is part of a National, indeed international movement, originally founded in France in 1972. The UK U3A movement began in 1982 and aims to encourage groups of people to come together and continue their enjoyment of learning in subjects of interest to them through self-help interest groups covering a wide range of topics and activities as chosen by their members, not working towards qualifications but learning purely for pleasure. There is no minimum age but a focus on people who are no longer in full-time employment. The UK National U3A organisation – the Third Age Trust (TAT) <https://www.u3a.org.uk/> is the overarching body for all local U3As. Today, our movement includes over 400,000 members in more than 1,000 U3As and continues to grow every day.

**Upton and Lytchett U3A** <https://upton-lytchett.u3asite.uk> was established in 2007 by a small group of people who had the vision and commitment to get things going. We are pleased to tell you that today, many years on, we have a membership that regularly exceeds 200 people. Over time we have expanded the opportunities we provide and now have about 35 interest Groups, with regular talks, social events, a welcome meeting for our new members and a very popular Leaders’ Lunch event to celebrate their essential contribution. This is a movement **for members by members**.

### Enrolment

First of all, let’s explain the enrolment process: August and September is when this commences and we encourage all of you who have not yet enrolled and paid your membership fee to do so now. New members can join throughout the year. When you join a Group, please check with the Group Leader that there is space for you before you pay your fee. For full information about the Groups on offer and the fees please see our website <https://upton-lytchett.u3asite.uk> , but essentially, request an online Information Booklet because the **contact details of our Leaders are *only* in the Information Booklet**, which is also available in paper form in Lytchett and Upton Libraries. We encourage everyone who can do so, to enrol online and pay their fee by bank transfer. This is very quick and straightforward for you and saves us a lot of administrative time. Unlike in previous years, the membership number you are issued with this year will continue year on year. It will be used to verify membership at our talks and social events. If during the year you decide to join a Group in a **more expensive fee Band**, please remember that you are expected to pay the additional amount at the time you join. If you are unsure about any aspect of enrolment any member of our committee would be pleased to assist you.

Upton & Lytchett u3a have a reciprocal arrangement with Purbeck u3a and for a fee of £10 our members can join their activities - <https://purbecku3a.org.uk/index.html> .

If you are a Purbeck u3a member and have paid your subscription this year, you can join Upton and Lytchett u3a as a Reciprocal Member.

*These are our Groups and fee Bands for 2025-26.*

BAND	GROUPS	U&L MEMBER		RECIPROCAL MEMBER	
		Full Year	Pro-rata	Full Year	Pro-rata
5	Pottery – Swimming	£60	£30	£45	£27
4	Pickleball – Table Tennis	£40	£20	£25	£17
3	Argentine Tango – Current Affairs – Tai Chi	£35	£17	£20	£15
2	Board Games – History of Art	£30	£15	£15	£12
1	See <b>Band 1 Groups</b> list below	£25	£12	£10	£10
	u3a Magazine Cost	£4	£4	£4	£4

**Band 1 Groups** – Art & Craft – Birdwatching – Books – Bridge – Chess – Classic Books – Classic Cars & Bikes – Coffee & Cake – Country Walks – Discovering Wessex – Exploring Dorset French Conversation – Garden Visits – Garry’s 3-4 mile Walks – German Conversation – Local History – Mah Jong – Nature Walks – Petanque/Boules – Photography – Play-Reading – Sunday Lunch – Wednesday Walks.

### **Group News from Gwyneth Harrop**

Hi everyone – Our existing Groups restarted at the beginning of September and are advertised on our website and the Information Booklet, so do have a look and see if you’d like to do anything new.

Does anyone have or know of anyone who has a large shed or outbuilding that a possible Men (and Women) in Sheds group could use for meetings? We have several people interested but nowhere for them to meet.

New Group – u3a Choir!!!

At last, after many requests and a long search, we have found a well-qualified musician to lead a choir for us. Are you interested in joining? The choir would be held on a Monday or Weds (timing yet to be decided) in a local venue and this is simply an initial request for expressions of interest from you all.

If you’d like to be involved, please let Gwyneth know on: [uplytu3a+groups@gmail.com](mailto:uplytu3a+groups@gmail.com)

We would need an accompanist to play a piano or keyboard, so does anyone know someone who might be prepared to do this?

We would aim for a fun and light-hearted session of singing, so do join us!

Our Upton Pétanque group is fairly full, so we could form a new group using the pitches in Lytchett Matravers. Please get in touch with me if you are interested in being part of this. Parking there is free!

Would anyone enjoy forming a group to go on outings at the weekend?  
If so, let me know.

All the best, Gwyneth Harrop – Groups Coordinator [uplytu3a+groups@gmail.com](mailto:uplytu3a+groups@gmail.com)

## **AGM News and New Committee Members**

Our AGM in July brought our year to a close and set the scene for this year. We were pleased to see so many members attending and enjoyed both the business element and the social get together that followed. This year there were several changes, and this is your new committee:

Honorary Chair – Iain Dickie [uplytu3a+chair@gmail.com](mailto:uplytu3a+chair@gmail.com)  
Honorary Vice Chair – Dawn Bason [uplytu3a+vicechair@gmail.com](mailto:uplytu3a+vicechair@gmail.com)  
Honorary Treasurer – Bernadette Stonelake [uplytu3a+treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:uplytu3a+treasurer@gmail.com)  
Honorary Secretary – Sharon Morgan [uplytu3a+sec@gmail.com](mailto:uplytu3a+sec@gmail.com)  
Membership Secretary – Sue Partridge [uplytu3a+memsec@gmail.com](mailto:uplytu3a+memsec@gmail.com)  
IT Manager – Bob Newnham [uplytu3a+admin@gmail.com](mailto:uplytu3a+admin@gmail.com)  
Groups Coordinator – Gwyneth Harrop [uplytu3a+groups@gmail.com](mailto:uplytu3a+groups@gmail.com)  
New Enquiries + Minutes Secretary – Sarah Wall [uplytu3a+join@gmail.com](mailto:uplytu3a+join@gmail.com)  
Social Secretary – Sheila Twelvetrees [uplytu3a+social@gmail.com](mailto:uplytu3a+social@gmail.com)  
Co-opted member – Andy Jenkins  
Health & Safety Consultant – Sarah Fleming

## **Charity Commission Registration**

We are very pleased to tell you that in July we became registered with the Charity Commission as a charity in our own right. Registered Number 1214239. Previously we have been covered by the charity status of our National body the Third Age Trust. Becoming a separate charity enables us to now claim Gift Aid from HMRC. We are still working through the finer details, but we anticipate this development will add a welcome boost to our finances. In order to claim Gift Aid we have to comply with the appropriate legislation, which includes supplying HMRC with certain information. To do this we need you to complete and sign the Gift Aid section of our Membership Form. If you registered through the online process the submission of your form is sufficient.

## **Magazine – u3a Matters**

The national u3a magazine is now called **u3a Matters** – available to our members either free online <https://www.u3a.org.uk/news/u3a-matters> or as a paper copy on payment of £4. You can subscribe to receive the paper copy on our Application Form. If you would like the magazine delivered to you but have not yet paid for it please contact us as soon as possible [uplytu3a+memsec@gmail.com](mailto:uplytu3a+memsec@gmail.com).

**Interest Groups Online (IGO)** <https://www.u3a.org.uk/news/newsletter>

We know that some people, for various reasons, have difficulty getting out of their home. Being a member of our u3a means that all of the u3a National online activities are open to you. These include a number of interest groups online. Why not take a look and see if there is anything there that appeals to you. There is a Radio Podcast, Events, Workshops, and u3a Festivals. In fact, there is even a u3a week starting on 22 September – this year the theme is Positive Ageing – and we all hope you feel positive and enjoy u3a. Unfortunately, we have not had time or enough people to plan any special events for this – but shall be keen to chat our to members and we encourage you all to be part of our friendly community.

**Learn, Laugh, Live** is the u3a motto!



## Publicity

How much time do you think it has taken us to write this Newsletter to tell you what's going on – and how many people have been involved? In time, it's been several hours and three quarters of the committee. This is just one of our publicity tasks and we are now at a point of asking ourselves how much you value the effort we put in. So, we need to **hear from you – is the Newsletter worthwhile?** Does it give you the information you need or should we abandon it? For example, an alternative would be to just post our key points of interest on our website <https://upton-lytchett.u3asite.uk> .

As a committee, we are all volunteers and as life becomes more complicated, running u3a needs more commitment from our members.

### **u3a is for members by members.**

We feel very lucky to have more than 30 active Group Leaders, all of whom give up their time to ensure our Groups run smoothly. We are extremely grateful to each and every one of them, and all those who help out at our numerous events, also for those who write articles for Parish Magazines, and this Newsletter but there is more to do behind the scenes to keep things going. Perhaps we have a member who would like to help collate and produce our Newsletters?

### **How could you help?**

Our request for help in the past has drawn very little success – so now, we are taking a different approach. We will be talking to our members personally to ask what they can contribute. All kinds of small contributions have a value, whether that is putting out a chair at a talk, making a cake for the Christmas Party, delivering something, offering a lift, writing an article or helping with Publicity. Please give it a thought – what can you offer?

All comments are of interest to us. Dawn, our Vice Chair would like to hear from you: Dawn Bason 01202 624233 or [uplytu3a+vicechair@gmail.com](mailto:uplytu3a+vicechair@gmail.com)

- We would particularly like to hear from all our members about **how you heard about u3a** and **why you joined Upton & Lytchett u3a**.
- Also please consider inviting your friends to join **Upton & Lytchett u3a**.

*Now you have read this far* – **Eric Midwinter**

A special note in fond memory of **Eric Midwinter** who passed away in August. He was one of the visionary co-founders of the u3a movement in 1982, alongside Peter Laslett and Michael Young. Often seen as the face of u3a, he was instrumental in promoting the concept to the wider world.

Radio 4 featured him in '**Last Word**', there were many obituaries in the press and an article in **u3a Matters magazine**.

There is also a **u3a YouTube Channel**. You can watch the full conversation between Eric and Liz Thackray the previous Chair of the Third Age Trust on [our YouTube Channel](#).

*Finally .....*

**An amusing article from Sarah Wall** our committee member who is also a Group Leader for Birdwatching and Nature

### **Drama in the Garden**

You don't know what you might witness in your back garden!

I have a crabapple tree in my garden – the apples are red and ripe now (about the size of a large marble). I grew it to attract winter birds when other food is scarce. The two-year-old tree is just big enough to take the weight of, say, a pigeon. Of which I have many, that visit my garden. One decided that it had to investigate. Having knocked down several crabapples from the tree, it established a modus operandi.

- Walk all round the fallen crabs and peck at them.
- Choose one without a leaf and try to swallow it.
- Try desperately to consume this large red thing that won't quite go down your throat.
- Drop it in disgust and watch it roll away.
- Try another crab, this time with a leaf attached.
- Get it into your beak – ah, the leaf is in the way.
- Swing your head vigorously from side to side to get rid of the pesky leaf.
- Leaf will not go – drop crabapple.
- Try another apple – a really big one this time.
- Get it well in your beak and fling your head back.
- Oops – crabapple flies out over your head and lands behind you.
- Turn round and do a bit of a search – can't see it.
- Only one thing for it – fly up into tree and try to dislodge more crabs.

At which point I rush out and shoo the silly bird away...

PS: this was all observed by me and is absolutely true!

**Sarah Wall**

*and some photo snaps to close*

A recce for a walking group – delightful Dorset ..... followed by a stunning sun set.



*Happy autumn everyone*

*(Revision B: Cancelled Talk 17 October + generic email addresses)*