

Welcome to the latest newsletter for our group, to kick off the new round of terms for this year.

Introduction

Unless you're a brand-new member, this first item might not come as a surprise, but u3a HQ conducted a survey of members last year, and the results make for an interesting read.

As the comment that introduces the survey report states:

"Across the movement, local u3as are enriching later life at remarkable scale. Members create the groups, share knowledge, welcome new people and nurture the communities where learning and friendship grow."

Many respondents commented that membership had resulted in their taking up a new sport, while others found that just trying something new had revolutionised their attitude to saying 'yes' to opportunities. Many other members remarked on how joining u3a had turned out to be one of the best decisions they'd made, citing the fun they'd experienced while making new friends and exploring all the available activities and groups on offer.

In a nutshell, the results show that, of the 10,000-plus respondents:

- **95%** say u3a has improved their life in some way
- **90%** say u3a gives them opportunities to keep learning and stay curious
- **79%** say u3a has expanded their social connections
- **77%** say their sense of wellbeing has improved since joining u3a
- **66%** say u3a has helped them stay mentally and physically active
- **45%** say being part of u3a has reduced feelings of loneliness or isolation

Those are pretty impressive results for an organisation comprised of volunteers!

While it's good to know that a wide variety of groups and activities is available, it's also important to share the benefits that you feel and encourage others to experience those benefits for themselves.

If you agree with that summary, perhaps consider spreading the word among those of your acquaintance who are not members? This will help out your local group and the wider organisation, as well as offering enjoyment and more to some of those about whom you care.

And, with that, back to the business of our own u3a group:

Tea and Talk

Our Tea and Talk this term will take place at **St Dunstan's Church Hall, Upton**, on **Wednesday 11 November starting at 2 pm**.

SAVE THE DATE!!

Our speaker, **Richard Hutley**, will be telling us about the life and times of **Isaac Gulliver – the 'King of Dorset Smugglers'**, who financed the beginnings of Bournemouth – a fascinating insight into his life, activities and his legacy.

Richard Hutley lives locally – he is a retired Police Inspector with many hobbies and interests, who has created talks from extensive research and knowledge of his subjects. His popular and thought-provoking presentation, based on facts and evidence, is sure to keep us intrigued and entertained. The talk is free to Upton and Lytchett u3a members – other attendees pay £4, but are most welcome.

Tea and biscuits will be served after the talk.

Risk Assessments

Group Leaders have been asked to complete and submit Risk Assessments for the activities or groups of which they take charge. Where needed, assistance will be offered to complete this necessary task. It is hoped that this exercise can be completed by December. Activity-specific forms have been developed for distribution to the various Group Leaders.

Members should be aware that they can inspect the completed Risk Assessments for the groups to which they belong, and discuss them with Group Leaders should they feel the need.

Organisational Alert

Our u3a group has a pressing need for a **Catering Organiser**. This is an extremely important position if event refreshments are to continue unabated. Should you wish to volunteer, please contact Dawn Bason at uplytu3a+chair@gmail.com.

New Members' Coffee Morning

For an easy introduction to our u3a group, there will be a Coffee Morning for new members, to be held at **Lytchett Matravers Youth Hall on October 29th, starting at 10.30**. This is a great opportunity to introduce yourself to the group and to learn who else is a newly-fledged member.

Skittles Night

Hot off the press! **Join Sheila for Skittles! Friday 30th October at 6.30pm Clay Pipe Inn: £15** per head and includes a basket meal. Menu choice is Chicken, Scampi, Sausages or Vegetarian option. Your food choice is needed when you book.

Cash payment on the night please. There is a limit of 20 people, so it's first come first served.

Respond via email uplytu3a+social@gmail.com.

Christmas Party

After some deliberation, it has been decided that, due to December being somewhat of a busy month for most members, the Christmas Party should be deferred until January, thus becoming a **New Year's Party**. It is hoped that this will help spice up what might otherwise be a 'flat' month following all the previous season's excitement.

Summer Party

After even more deliberation, it has been decided to revive the Summer Party. This will be arranged for some time in June 2027, so keep your calendars clear for the announcement.

Groups

As can be seen from this year's Information Booklet (and on our group's website - <https://upton-lytchett.u3asite.uk/>) - there are lots of varied activities from which to choose. Anything from *Argentine Tango* to *Writing for Fun* (we've still not managed activities under X, Y or Z, so a Yachting group would help with that).

As ever, if you have any ideas for additional groups that you would like to see considered for start-up, please inform the Groups Coordinator at uplytu3a+groups@gmail.com.

One of the newest groups, *Writing for Fun*, got off to a good start and hopes to continue in the same vein. There is one place available for the coming term, so, if you fancy unleashing your inner Tolstoy (or Rowling), there's still hope! The group leader, Ginny, would be pleased to hear from you.

u3a Week

September 19th to 27th 2026 is when u3a Week will take place. (That looks like more than a week, but who's counting?)

It's an annual event to showcase the activity, learning and fun which takes place across the movement every day. And it is intended to be a celebration of positive ageing, and to highlight members' experiences.

This year's theme is '*Expanding Horizons*'. It is hoped that members will expand their own horizons by trying something new – just for fun. Why not give it a go?

There are also some free-to-participate Zoom events, including:

- *Secrets of the Human Brain: Sleep and Dreams* (Monday 21 at 2 pm)
- *The Enchanted Archipelago: a journey through the Galapagos* (Tuesday 22, at 2 pm)
- *Future Lives: Promoting brain health - from evidence to action* (Thursday 24, at 2 pm)
- *Live Cookery Demonstration – Try Something New* (Friday 25 at 10 am)

Suggestions for new things to try include:

- Learn to count from 1 to 10 in a language you don't know
- Write a poem or short story
- Host a quiz night
- Learn a dance routine
- Research a topic about which you've always been curious
- Go to your local library and explore the history of where you live

Short Story

This one concerns the mind-expanding effects of u3a membership.

Courage Beyond The Call Of Duty

Ben hated the idea of public speaking. As much as anything else, it was large collections of people that he avoided, so standing up in front of a roomful and trying to say anything coherent was pretty much a non-starter.

Priscilla, his wife, was surprised when he announced that he was going to attend the AGM of his local u3a group. 'You won't know most people there,' she warned.

Unusually headstrong, Ben confirmed that he'd decided to take his chances. 'What's the worst that could happen?' he asked.

Priscilla smiled and raised her eyes to heaven. 'Well, someone might start a conversation with you,' she offered.

'I'll manage', Ben countered.

At the AGM, held in the Village Hall, various of the worthies who comprised the Committee took the microphone (some more effectively than others) and delivered their reports to the expectant motley seated within.

The event was livelier than Ben had expected, with a few of the membership becoming a trifle heated when delivering their point of view. Ben felt a sneaking admiration for how the various committee members handled the ensuing argy-bargy. 'Grace Under Pressure', he thought, calling to mind an album by the band Rush.

Once the business had concluded, the attendees enjoyed the snacks and drinks on offer, although Ben did not, since he was following a strict regime so far as intake of solids and beverages was concerned. Almost as strict as his inclination to avoid crowds.

It turned out, during some of the post-meeting chatter, that he recognised, and was recognised in turn by, a few other group members, some of whose names he even managed to conjure from his memory. As the minutes passed, he began to relax and even mulled over the idea that this sort of thing wasn't that bad, once you'd acclimatised.

Once the throng began to disperse, Ben helped with folding and stacking the chairs into the lowest corner of the village hall (the bit where the pickleballs always roll, sometimes never to be seen again).

As he walked home, Ben felt that, everything considered, he'd handled himself quite well. He wasn't absolutely sure, but he thought he might turn up for the next AGM, too.

'Wait 'til Priscilla hears that,' he thought to himself, just before his inner voice suggested that he not get too smug, since once was happenstance, while twice had not yet come to pass.

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If you've not attended your u3a group's AGM, why not emulate Ben and give it a go next year?

That's it for this issue of the Newsletter. Now, you can get on with enjoying your u3a membership.