

Nottinghamshire Network of u3as

AUGUST 2026

## MESSAGE FROM JOHN BUTLER, CHAIR OF THE NOTTS NETWORK

Hi everyone,

I hope you have all been enjoying this spell of extreme summer weather as much as possible.

On one of the cloudier days in mid-June, I was delighted to join a large number of u3as from North Nottinghamshire at the u3a Festival in Sherwood Forest. It was great to meet so many u3a members and committee members during my short visit. A couple of highlights for me were taking part in the yo-yo and pétanque competitions – although I have to admit I failed rather miserably at both! – and listening to the ukulele band.

In early July, in my capacity as Council Representative, I joined Southwell u3a at their monthly meeting where they were celebrating their 20th anniversary. I was made most welcome and thoroughly enjoyed the occasion.

Turning to Peer Support Groups, one of the key features the Network offers to local u3as, I have been working with Chris Niven to improve the way we communicate and work within these groups. As a result, a number of new initiatives are being introduced.

I wish you all a pleasant summer of u3a activities. I'm sure this will include promotional events in your local communities as the u3a Movement celebrates u3a Week from 19 to 27 September.

Best wishes,

John Butler  
Chair – Nottinghamshire Network of u3as  
u3a East Midlands Region Council Representative

[John.Butler@u3a.org.uk](mailto:John.Butler@u3a.org.uk)  
07711 535018

## NEWS FROM THE NOTTS NETWORK

### Peer Support Groups (PSGs)

The Notts Network was a pioneer in initiating and developing Peer Support Groups (PSGs). What are PSGs? They enable u3a committee members to exchange experiences and learn collaboratively. PSGs are a very valuable resource for u3a committee members.

We currently have seven PSGs managed by the members below. If you are a committee member, new or old and would like to meet with others in your role there are full details on the Notts Network website.

Chairs' PSG – Chris Niven

Treasurers' PSG – Jan Clarke-Humphries

Secretaries' PSG – vacancy (if anyone is interested in leading this group, please let me know)

Membership Secretaries' PSG – Pat Lockett

Groups Co-ordinators' PSG – Jean Hogg

Speaker Finders' PSG – Paul Fileman

Publicity PSG – Paul Fileman

Next meetings;

Groups Co-ordinators' PSG – Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September 4.30 via zoom

Chairs' PSG – Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September 4.30 via zoom.

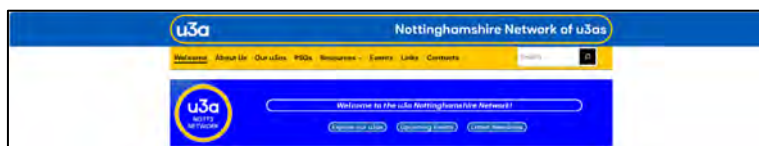
If you would like any further information do have a look at our Nottinghamshire Network website or contact me [chrisniven1@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:chrisniven1@yahoo.co.uk).

Finally, please make sure your committee details are up to date on Nottinghamshire Network Beacon. You will then automatically be sent an invitation to PSG meetings. If in doubt, contact Margot Gale [margot.nottsnetwork@outlook.com](mailto:margot.nottsnetwork@outlook.com)

We look forward to seeing you at future meetings.

Chris Niven

PSG Co-ordinator



### FESTIVAL IN THE PARK

In spite of the day starting with spots of rain and drizzle, members of Ashfield, Dukeries, Forest Town, Mansfield, Rainworth, Sherwood and Worksop u3as arrived early in the morning and within an hour, the amphitheatre and picnic area of Sherwood Forest were transformed into a blue and yellow u3a Festival.

The live music which showcased how professional our musicians are, started with Irene and Win, a musical duo from Forest Town u3a.





After a well-choreographed changeover, the 25-strong Jubilee Ukulele Band (Dukeries u3a) had our feet tapping with their melodies and songs. After lunch, the pace was picked up again with sounds from the Banjoleers from Dukeries u3a and the programme was completed by the Guitar Group from Workop u3a, who concluded the day with encores!

The high standard of the music, clearly the result of hard practice and rehearsal, was greatly appreciated by the surrounding audience and anyone coming into Sherwood Forest on the day was greeted by high quality tunes which brought smiles to lots of faces.

u3as erected their own gazebos, tables and publicity stands to promote membership. They also offered chances to enter competitions and challenged us to table top games.

Further down in the picnic area, games which were supplied by several u3as and co-ordinated by Claire Wilkie from Sherwood, were played throughout the day. The Welly-Wanging Challenge concluded the day and squeals of laughter and cheers could be heard around the playing areas.

Mid-day, a walk to the Major Oak, where Ranger Clare gave information about the challenges for conservationists, was led by Iris Beadle, helped by Stefan Ziemba and Kevin



Morrell from Dukeries u3a.

Throughout the day, many members of u3a and the general public enjoyed relaxing, chatting and eating picnics in a most amiable and enjoyable atmosphere which promoted the friendship and fellowship of u3a groups.

Our guest of honour was John Butler, Chair of the Nottinghamshire Network and our East Midlands Council representative. John kindly came to show his support and he chatted with many members in the morning. The sunshine made a visit too!

The behind the scenes planning for the event took place over several months by Claire Wilkie, Sherwood u3a, Kathryn Henshaw, Carole and Bill Harrison from Mansfield u3a and Leslye Henstock from Dukeries u3a. Special thanks were sent to Megan Huntley and staff at RSPB Sherwood Forest, who arranged the event with the organisers and supplied gazebos and chairs for the musicians.



A massive thank you is sent to everyone who contributed to the publicity of the event and the festival on the day. A huge amount of equipment was transported safely to and from the site, and by 4 p.m. Sherwood Forest was back to normal without a trace of evidence that u3a had been there!!

Thanks also to the Third Age Trust for their Publicity Grant which was used to purchase u3a pens, blue and yellow balloons and the licence fee for the day.

Thank you to all of you who came along to support this event!

Elaine Huckerby, Leslye Henstock and Bill Harrison  
North Notts Neighbourhood Group representatives

## NEWS FROM THE EAST MIDLANDS

### News from your Council Reps

In the two months since our last Newsbites, John and I have been busy working across the Region to support our u3as. A number of you have contacted us to help with issues that arise for you. Often, we act as a listening ear and can help in pointing you in the right direction to the Third Age Trust for advice or to another u3a which has experienced the same problem and worked through it.



We have also been invited to a number of special occasions where u3as are celebrating milestone anniversaries. We were delighted to join Southwell u3a for their main meeting where Chair, Mike Freemantle, gave a presentation exploring the 20 years of Southwell's existence. This was a delightful talk and slideshow peppered with many humorous anecdotes. Congratulations to all of you as you continue to go from strength to strength.



John was lucky enough to be able to attend the u3a Festival in Sherwood Forest put on by u3as belonging to the North Notts Neighbourhood Group. This day exemplified the spirit of "can do together" with members of Ashfield, Dukeries, Forest Town, Mansfield, Rainworth, Sherwood and Worksop coming together to put on a really enjoyable day.

We are also pleased to announce the launch of the new u3a East Midlands Region website which Terry Moore has devised with a little help from Maria and Rosie. Terry, quite recently, published our Notts Network website and, once again, he has done a marvellous job – it really is very good. Do help him keep it up to date by passing through your notices about up and coming events for both websites.

I hope you are all aware by now of the East Midlands region workshop entitled "Promoting your u3a". Please see the poster on page 6 advertising the event, which has already been forwarded to u3as. Although it is being held in Lincolnshire it is open to u3a members across the region.

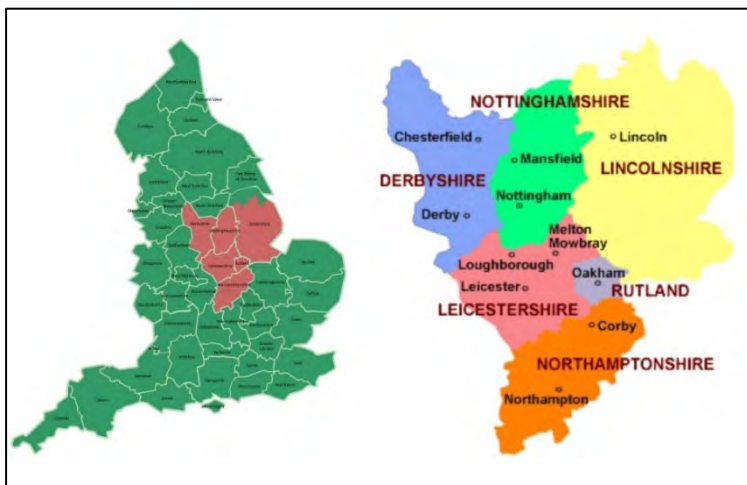
Many thanks for your support.

Rosie Allen  
[Rosie.Allen@u3a.org.uk](mailto:Rosie.Allen@u3a.org.uk)

John Butler  
[John.Butler@u3a.org.uk](mailto:John.Butler@u3a.org.uk)

## East Midlands Region Website

Did you know that each Nottinghamshire u3a belongs to the East Midlands Region of u3as? Across the UK, u3a regional networks help neighbouring u3as share resources, support one another, and work together through local clusters and county networks.



The East Midlands Region has set up a Support Team to work with the u3a Council representatives for the East Midlands Region. Together, they are exploring ways for u3as across Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, and Nottinghamshire to work more closely together.

As part of this work, Terry Moore has refreshed the East Midlands Region website using the u3a SiteWorks

package, with support from Maria Gabrielczyk and Rosie Allen. The new website is now live, and each network county has its own page with links to local u3as.

The u3a Council representatives for the East Midlands Region, Rosie Allen and John Butler, are providing newsletters and updates on regional events.

In short, the refreshed website is a useful place to find regional information, local links, newsletters, and event updates for u3as across the East Midlands.

Please have a look when you have time!

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

Terry Moore  
Web Manager  
East Midlands Region Support Team

**u3a**

East Midlands  
Region

learn,  
laugh,  
live



WORKSHOP

# Promoting your u3a!



**DATE : Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2026**

**TIMING : 10am Registration  
10.30am - 2.30pm Workshop**

**VENUE : Ropsley Hall, Braceby Road  
Ropsley, Grantham NG33 4BN**

- Advice from the Trust's Sam Dukes, Head of Marketing
- Use of Social Media, Sheila Crawley, Trust Vice Chair
- A success story from a u3a
- An opportunity to share your own ideas

**ADMISSION FREE**  
**with light refreshments provided**  
**Bring your own lunch**

Reserve your place by emailing :

[margot.nottsnetwork@outlook.com](mailto:margot.nottsnetwork@outlook.com)

Include your name, u3a, county & email address

**Stronger together**  
**Supporting u3as across the East Midlands**

## BINGHAM u3a

Bingham u3a finished its 25th anniversary celebrations with a Picnic in the Park at the town pavilion, home of Bingham Rugby Club. More than 80 members attended and were greeted with a glass of bubbly, along with a local town quiz to complete, with a prize donated by local restaurant No. 16.

Entertainment was provided by the Strawberry Jammers, who performed two 40-minute sessions of folk-based music, which was enjoyed by everyone.



The celebratory cakes were supplied by Sue from Rhubarbs Café based in Burton Joyce. The first cut of the cake was made by Tony Wallace the Bingham Town Mayor and Pat Ancliffe (Bingham u3a's longest serving member). Tony also gave a welcome speech followed by a thank you from our Chair Veronica Perry.

The quiz was won by a team of Bingham residents led by Judy Soar. The consolation chocolates went to the mayor!



An excellent event blessed by good weather, enjoyed by all.

John Perry  
Publicity officer



## RAVENSHEAD u3a

Seven members of the Aprons and Appetites group travelled to London on Friday 19 June, leaving Newark on the 9.05 a.m. train and arriving at King's Cross on one of the year's hottest days.



Using bus passes, the group headed to Temple Church, where volunteer Colin gave an engaging talk on its Knights Templar origins, links to the Magna Carta, and William Marshal.



Lunch followed at Gray's Inn, where member Maria enabled access to the historic dining hall and its traditions, including the carved screen said to be a gift from Elizabeth I.



The group continued to Trafalgar Square and visited the Banksy sculpture at Waterloo Place before splitting up to explore galleries or walk by the Thames.

By early evening they returned to King's Cross

for the 7.00 p.m. train home. The outing reflected the group's love of food, culture, and shared experiences.

Judith Moore



## BEESTON u3a

There was a packed hall at our open meeting on 6th August as Marcus Alton (mediamarcus.com) spoke about Brian Clough: The Lost Tapes. Marcus, a former BBC journalist, recalled his lifelong fascination with Clough, dating back to childhood, through to interviewing him for real and always addressing him as "Mr Clough."

He played archive recordings featuring Clough and his family, alongside photos charting his managerial career, prompting many in the audience to share their own memories. Marcus discussed Clough's man-management style, his influence on players like Kenny Burns, and reflected movingly on their final interview before Clough's death at 69.

He also described his campaign for a Clough knighthood, which led instead to a fundraising drive and the 2008 unveiling of a bronze statue in Nottingham.

Dr. Julia Tabreham  
Speaker Seeker

## FOREST TOWN & DISTRICT u3a

On the hottest day of the year 29 members teed off for Pirate Adventure Golf at Ramsdale Golf Club, with the heat beating down only 11 members finished the course. Others one by one retreated to the Club House for a refreshing drink. We rounded off the morning with two course lunch.



We had a lovely sunny day for our trip to Scarborough where 61 members enjoyed their time either in the ice cream parlour, a little shopping, walking along the prom and of course their fish & chips.



Our 4<sup>TH</sup> Summer Ball with the theme "Fire & Ice" was again a great success. The room was dressed and on arrival a complimentary glass of Prosecco was served. We greeted guests from Mansfield and Warsop u3as, and many joined in the theme and dressed in red and white.

Undercover 60s started the evening and it wasn't long before the dance floor became full.



Kathryn Cope

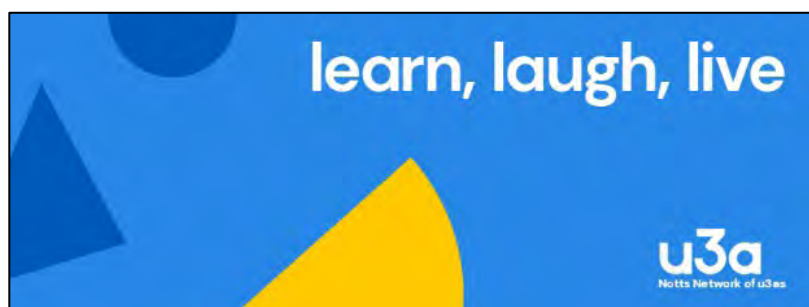
### EASTWOOD u3a

The Creative Writing group decided to have a change of scenery and go to Collier's Wood for their writing session. The aim was to listen to some of the pieces that had been generated whilst discussing names; family names, popular names, unusual names. Some members got inspiration from family members and events often going back hundreds of years.

Whilst at the woods our session was gatecrashed by locals!



Anne Steel



## WORKSOP u3a

When members of Steelpantastic set off for the National u3a Summer Schools Festival in York, they were carrying much more than steel pans, music stands and brightly coloured shirts. They were taking with them months of commitment, practice, friendship and enthusiasm that perfectly reflect the spirit of u3a.

The University of York campus was buzzing with activity as u3a groups from across the country gathered to share skills, interests and experiences.

Performing in Hendrix Hall provided a memorable setting for the concert. Our programme, featuring music inspired by the Caribbean and beyond, was warmly received by an audience of more than one hundred people.



Perhaps most rewarding of all was the way the performance reflected the values at the heart of u3a. The festival showcased a wide range of activities, interests and opportunities for learning, yet Steelpantastic demonstrated something particularly important: creativity, enjoyment and achievement do not diminish with age. If anything, they flourish.

Sheila Massey

## EDWALTON u3a

A group of our members visited the William Booth Museum in Sneinton in June. They were entertained by a film of the life of William Booth, the founder and leader of the Salvation Army, before visiting his local church, St Stephens, across the road from his birthplace. Our thanks go to Julie Obermeyer, the museum officer for an Informative and entertaining visit.



Martin Holder  
Treasurer

## MANSFIELD u3a

On a very hot day, 22 of our u3a members travelled to London for a visit to the Houses of Parliament, courtesy of Steve Yemm, MP for Mansfield.

We entered Westminster Hall, built in 1097 and the oldest part of the parliamentary buildings. The late Queen Elizabeth II lay in state here in September 2022, when around 250,000 mourners filed past her coffin to pay their respects.

Steve Yemm hosted a Q&A session, answering questions ranging from the future of Mansfield town centre and the Miners' Pension Scheme to whether people are proud to be British.

The highlight was a tour of the Commons and Lords. The familiar green leather seating in the Commons can accommodate only about half the MPs, while the opulent red and gold of the Lords reflects its historic character. Although photography was not permitted in the chambers, we came away with some outstanding memories of a fascinating visit.

We welcomed back Paige Daniels, a former Oxford University student and local girl, to our July meeting. Paige updated us on her MSc research into the u3a movement, focusing particularly on Mansfield u3a.

Paige approached us in early 2025 to ask for our help with her research into the learning experiences of older adults. Her research included member surveys and interviews, exploring members' backgrounds, how they joined u3a, their early experiences and how they benefited from their activities.

We congratulate Paige on graduating with distinction and wish her every success.

Bill and Carole Harrison  
Publicity Officers



## MAPPERLEY & DISTRICT u3a

Mapperley & District u3a celebrated its 10th anniversary in June with two special events. At our monthly meeting we were entertained by our singing, ukulele and MaDAmDrammers groups. One of our founder members, Vic Blake wrote and performed a poem about our first 10 years and we had a beautiful celebration cake, made by another member, which was cut by all four of our Chairs, from inception to date.

Two days later we enjoyed a fabulous barn dance with caller and group Kurly Kale, and a hot supper. Despite it



being one of the hottest nights of the year, the turnout was great and it proved so popular we hope to repeat it next year.

Happy Birthday to all our MaD members.

Val Wilkinson  
Chair

### HUCKNALL & DISTRICT u3a

On 7 July, we enjoyed a delightful circular walk starting and finishing in the attractive Peak District village of Monyash. Leaving the village, we followed the Limestone Way towards Cales Farm, taking in the rolling limestone countryside and the wide-ranging views.

From Cales Farm we continued to Gib Hill and the impressive Arbor Low Henge, one of Britain's finest prehistoric stone circles. The peaceful setting and ancient atmosphere made this a memorable point of the walk. After exploring the site, we retraced our steps to Cales Farm before heading through Caldale and on to Oneash Grange Farm.



Rejoining the Limestone Way, we descended into the beautiful Lathkill Dale, where the clear river, limestone cliffs and abundant wildflowers created a picturesque landscape. The dale offered a pleasant contrast to the open upland scenery experienced earlier in the day. Leaving Lathkill Dale, we climbed steadily through Shaw Dale before returning to Monyash, completing an enjoyable and varied circular route. The walk combined fascinating prehistoric history, attractive farmland, peaceful dales and excellent scenery throughout. It was a rewarding day in the Peak District, with well-defined paths, good weather and plenty of opportunities to appreciate both the natural beauty and rich heritage of the area.

Mark Thornley

## STAPLEFORD & DISTRICT u3a

Late discovery of a community-led history project inspired by the Bayeux Tapestry's arrival in England left only three weeks to produce an entry reflecting our own contribution to community spirit in the town. A communication gap means it is the only panel not using "fabric and yarn".

Panels will tour local community spots this summer, including Stapleford Library from 1st August.

We thank all our Interest Group Leaders who explained the purpose and provided photographs. We are hoping that the leaflets might encourage non-members to try us out!

Marion Edwards  
Secretary



## 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 100-150 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.

Editor

## WOLLATON u3a

Wollaton u3a members enjoyed a varied programme of activities in recent months.

In February and March, Nottingham Playhouse hosted two backstage tours, with some members staying on to see matinee performances of *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* and *Punch*. The tours included the auditorium, stage, wardrobe and props, as well as the Playhouse's history, its role as a producing theatre and plans for future development. Highly recommended!



In June, members enjoyed a day on Nottingham's canals with the Nottingham Narrow Boat Project. They helped work the locks and steer the boats to Beeston Rylands, enjoying the wildlife and sunshine along the way. A coffee and cake stop at the Heritage Café completed an enjoyable day.

May's talk, by Noel Kelly of Beeston u3a, explored the history and legacy of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission – a fascinating and moving reminder of the importance of remembering the past.

Ann Marshall  
Vice Chair

## ARNOLD u3a

### Fresh Air and Fun at the Festival

The unique sport, Short Lawn Bowls (SLB), was devised by Hazel Ward for Arnold u3a to ensure members with mobility or strength limitations can enjoy an inclusive alternative to full-length bowls.

At the York Festival, SLB was a big hit, giving fresh air and fun to u3a members from as far afield as Scotland and Plymouth, on the imposing lawn of Heslington Hall (HQ of bomber command in the war). The cheerful atmosphere, shared laughter and light-hearted competition made SLB such an enjoyable outdoor activity, and



my thanks go to all who helped make it so much fun.



We now want to help other u3as approach their local bowls clubs and put SLB on the map. u3as in our network can organise group activities to come to Daybrook Bowls Club for one-off sessions of SLB. For details, email [hazelshortward@gmail.com](mailto:hazelshortward@gmail.com).

Hazel Ward  
Chair

## NATIONAL NEWS

### u3a Festival 2026

u3a Festival 2026 burst into life at the beginning of July, once again taking over the University of York campus. More than 1,000 u3a members gathered from across the country, including an enthusiastic contingent from Nottinghamshire's u3as.

Several of us donned steward badges, spending three fun-filled days welcoming new faces, pointing people in the right direction, and helping activity leaders keep everything running smoothly. It was a fantastic way to meet fellow members and soak up the festival atmosphere.

Nottinghamshire members were also at the heart of the action. John Butler, Ravenshead u3a, led the ever-popular Let's Talk Tech sessions, John Scottow, Beeston u3a, led the wine tasting sessions while Hazel Ward, Arnold u3A, introduced festival-goers to her innovative new game, Short Lawn Bowls, with plenty of willing recruits eager to give it a try. Meanwhile, Worksop u3a's talented steel pan players, "Steelpantastic" – the only u3a steel pan group in the UK – once again wowed audiences with their vibrant performances.



The festival is the ultimate celebration of the u3a motto: Learn, Laugh and Live. With an incredible range of activities on offer, there was something for everyone – from flower arranging and wine tasting to tai chi and handbell ringing. Every moment of the three-day event was packed with opportunities to try something new, make friends, and have fun.



And the excitement didn't stop when the daytime sessions ended. The evenings brought their own entertainment, with nostalgic Juke Box Jury sessions (who remembers that?) and lively ceilidh dancing ensuring the festival spirit continued long into the night.

For those who attended, Festival 2026 was a wonderful reminder of what makes u3a so special: friendship, fun, and the joy of discovering new interests together.

Rosie Allen  
East Midlands Council Representative

#### 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 7<sup>th</sup> October 2026 to [maria.newsbytes@gmail.com](mailto:maria.newsbytes@gmail.com)