

Nottinghamshire Network of u3as

FEBRUARY 2026

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

Hello everyone,

From monitoring our u3a Notts Network Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/u3anottsnetwork/](http://www.facebook.com/u3anottsnetwork/) I can see that at a number of u3as there is still an appetite for outdoor based activities, come floods, rain, snow or freezing temperatures!

Our Nottinghamshire Network continues to thrive, with so much going on, and our guest at January's Network meeting, Karen Green from the u3a Network Link, confirmed that we are a particularly vibrant county Network compared with others in the movement.



With Chris Niven having stayed on the Committee in the role of Peer Support Group Coordinator, we will soon be looking at how we can improve relevance and engagement for those with local u3a committee responsibilities, such as Chairs, Business Secretaries, Treasurers, Group Coordinators, Publicity Officers, Trips Organisers and Speaker Seekers. Suggestions for improvement are welcome!

We are also meeting shortly as a committee to refine the content of the next free member workshop at the Newstead Centre on 1<sup>st</sup> June. More information will be shared closer to the time, but in the meantime please save the date.

I do hope that you're getting the most out of your u3a membership at a local level, and we as a Network will do all we can to support you.

Best wishes,

*John*

## NEWS FROM THE NOTTS NETWORK

### Notts Network Website update

At the Notts Network meeting in October 2025 the discussion groups were asked "What do you want to see on the Website?" A summary was provided to committee members. Since then, I have been making some changes in line with the requests (shown in bold italics) which are noted below:

1. A page about PSGs with a link to contacts, and reports. The PSG page was already there with all contacts (now updated) to the specific PSG group leader. Meetings of these groups are shown as Forthcoming Events on this page (and on the main Event page). However, if I do not receive information about these groups, I cannot add anything. Consequently, information is limited as are any reports of meetings which, when received, are summarised and added to the next group meeting event for reference.
2. Newsbites. The request was to have a direct link to the latest Newsbites newsletter on the front page of the website. This has been added. Click on the Newsbites graphic to open the PDF in a new browser tab.
3. Links to items on the national website, eg national events. A new page has been added to the Resources section entitled "u3a Trust". This page has many links to the u3a website as well as other resources offered by the u3a trust. The page gives u3a members a clear gateway into the national u3a world, highlighting where to find news, learning resources, online talks, national events, governance guidance, Beacon and SiteWorks support, publicity materials, and member opportunities such as u3a Friends, podcasts, photography projects, and the upcoming u3a Festival 2026. It acts as a concise hub linking local members to the wider movement's tools, inspiration, and ways to get involved.
4. A facility listing all Interest groups in the Network. The previous method of doing this was not brought over from the old website. Updating it would continue to be a time-consuming problem, so I have sought a different approach for now. I have added a section on the "Our u3as" page entitled Interest Groups. This section explains how to search for interest groups on the u3a Oversight website. It includes all of the u3a SiteWorks websites Interest groups of which there are over 700 and the list is automatically updated. If your u3a or others adopt SiteWorks for their websites, their Interest Groups will be included automatically. I have colour coded the u3a links on the website to show those that are.
5. Individual u3a websites should have a link to the Notts Network site. I agree with that comment. Does your website have one?

Terry Moore  
Web Manager

## DUKERIES u3a

Our festive celebration at the Ollerton Jubilee Hall really had to be seen to be believed. The tables were absolutely groaning with seasonal fare which was thoroughly relished by a packed hall. Games followed and a very healthy £145 was raised for our charity, the Lincs and Notts Air Ambulance which took our total contribution to this cause above £9k.

The afternoon concluded with a spirited performance from our Banjoleers which sent members skipping and dancing homewards.



Elsewhere, the Ramblers enjoyed a Christmas walk in Sherwood Forest where they were 'treated' to the sight of one of the local 'naked ramblers' who was clearly feeling the chill! The All Sorts and Gardening Group made festive table decorations, whilst, on Sunday November 30<sup>th</sup>, the Jubilee Ukulele Group entertained over eighty people in the Jubilee Hall with a sing-along of popular songs and Christmas favourites.

Mike Mounsey



## EDWALTON GAMSTON & DISTRICT u3a

For our Christmas open meeting we had Roger Prescott present 'Juke Box Jury'. He had reproduced the set, as seen in the picture. We supplied four of our members as the voting panel. They needed to say if the song played would be a hit or a flop.



Our outings group organised a successful trip to see Sleeping Beauty at the Nottingham Playhouse and we turned out to be one of three u3as in the theatre. We then went on for a meal afterwards.

Our Science Group met up for drinks and nibbles at their Christmas social to play "Call my Bluff" revisiting black and white TV days with Frank Muir and Patrick Campbell. We also played the "1% club". Our thanks go to John Todd for organising this event and leading the Science Group.

Martin Holden  
Treasurer



## RAINWORTH & DISTRICT u3a

Thirty four members of Rainworth and District u3a enjoyed Christmas lunch at the Hostess Restaurant. The food was of the usual high standard as was the service. Music was provided and many got up to dance maybe ridding themselves of a few calories!!



Our own Christmas party was well attended. A visit from Baroness Bolsover left us in no doubt about how to prepare 'our cuppa' and how to drink it – and that if you are having a biscuit you should never 'dunk' it in public. Music was provided by The Ringtones.

A visit was also made to Doncaster Airport to view the Vulcan based there. Knowledgeable volunteers explained the different functions and parts of the aircraft.



Several members enjoyed 'The Last Night of the Proms' at the Hostess Restaurant. The music was provided by the Shirebrook Miners Welfare Band ensuring there was lots of hearty singing and flag waving.

Plans are well under way for activities and outings for the coming year.

Jackie Massey

## BEESTON u3a

This social event has become the defining starting point for Christmas celebrations at Beeston u3a for a number of years now and many of our members have enjoyed learning about – and sampling – a selection of fine wines. Our resident experts John Scottow, national subject advisor for Wine Appreciation, and Adrian Shipway gave us a rundown of each wine's characteristics before finally revealing the cost of each bottle. Everyone joined in appreciating the various wines from around the world, along with the charcuterie and cheeses that accompanied them.



Another successful social evening for our members, and you can see the enjoyment on their faces as well as the concentration when sampling the wines. This was a serious business!

Celia Billau  
Beeston u3a member and fine wine aficionado!

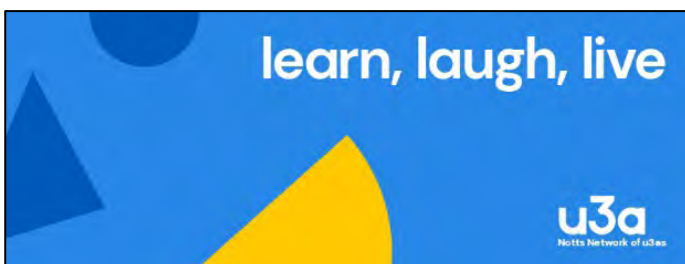
## SUTTON IN ASHFIELD u3a



December 2025 saw our Sutton in Ashfield u3a Drama Group delight audiences once again with its annual Christmas pantomime. Over the past decade the group has built a strong reputation for entertaining, creative and often laugh-out-loud productions, all staged with enthusiasm, teamwork and a great sense of fun. The Christmas panto was a fitting way to round off the year, showcasing not only the talent on stage but also the commitment and camaraderie behind the scenes.



June Hall



## NEWARK & DISTRICT u3a

In the run-up to Christmas our “Handbell Ringers” group, under the inspirational leadership of Judy Gees, gave a wonderful afternoon’s entertainment in a local community hall, after which a closing collection was made on behalf of Newark’s Beaumont House Hospice.

Whilst Christmas already seems a long time ago, what remains in our memories is the wonderful time we shared at our December Christmas party meeting. Well in excess of one hundred members gathered together for an afternoon of seasonal enjoyment which included a festive quiz & delicious party food – not to mention, the odd glass of ‘bubbly’ or two! Fun and laughter with our u3a friends: what a wonderful way to round off the year.



Maggie George  
Chairman



## WORKSOP & DISTRICT u3a

### Canasta & Cake Group

This card group has been going for nearly two years now and just keeps getting better and better. We usually have 16 or more players, which is brilliant, but in February we hit a record 29!!



We're not entirely sure what's behind our success – maybe it's the great game, the friendly bunch of people, or the absolutely amazing cakes (usually baked by the 13-year-old granddaughter of our leader, Debs!).

We'd love to welcome even more people to our sessions. As you can see from the photo, we're lucky to have a venue with plenty of space. All abilities are welcome, the game is easy enough to pick up, and it's a lovely way to spend a few hours on a Tuesday morning. Oh, and you must enjoy eating cake!

Alison Morton

## MANSFIELD u3a

Nine members of the Current Affairs Group visited the Houses of Parliament on January 16<sup>th</sup> 2026, courtesy of Steve Yemm, our local MP.

After an airport-style security inspection and a quick snack in the House Café we began an amazingly informative visit with insights (and secrets!) shared by our guide who was a mine of history and gossip.

Highlights ranged from a very stern-looking statue of the Iron Lady to watching proceedings from the Strangers' Gallery in the Lords where the End-of-Life Bill was being discussed. We also admired the newly restored clock face, with all the golden highlights shining.

A very enjoyable and memorable day, enjoyed by all.

Bill and Carole Harrison  
Publicity Officers



## STAPLEFORD & DISTRICT u3a

Shortly after our Christmas 'Fuddle', two hours of organised chaos saw members of the Gardening Group create twelve beautiful Christmas wreaths.



Our 2026 programme launched in January with "Tea and the Chinese Empress" by Mike Burton. He traced the extraordinary history of tea, revealing intrigue and skulduggery as European merchants sought to outwit rivals and tea producers, ultimately establishing tea plantations in India and damaging the Chinese economy.

February's Local History Group welcomed the Friends of Bennerley Viaduct. Built in 1877 between Cotmanhay and Awsworth, this iconic quarter-mile landmark is the longest Victorian wrought-iron viaduct in the country. Once derelict, it is now open to walkers and cyclists, with a new visitor centre due to open later this year.

Our February branch meeting, "Look After Your Sight", attracted an unusually large audience. Clinical Lead Optometrist Vik Measuria explained how vision works, highlighted common age-related conditions, and stressed the importance of early detection and everyday eye care.

Marion Edwards  
Secretary



## RAVENSHEAD u3a

At the beginning of February, a team of Committee volunteers started facilitating a series of government funded Ru3a-developed 'Digital Inclusion Workshops', as part of the Gedling Community Action Network's initiative to improve the digital skills of older people in our area.

More than 60 members attended our introductory meeting where they each completed a training needs analysis. The team will now use these assessments to plan future sessions between February and April to which the members will be invited as appropriate.

Our new Fashion Group met in January to investigate that vibrant decade known as the 'Roaring Twenties'.

Post WW1, the 1920s began as a period of economic prosperity. Industry expanded, as did consumerism, bringing with it a decade of rapid cultural change.

British life became 'Americanised' with film, music, dance, fashion and chain stores like Woolworths. Confidence and empowerment were reflected in women's fashions with shorter dresses and shorter hairstyles.

John Butler  
Chair

## NEWS FROM THE u3a EAST MIDLANDS SUPPORT TEAM

### Council Representatives Election – East Midlands

The election for Council Representatives is now underway, and the East Midlands region has two vacancies to be filled. This is an important opportunity for local voices to be represented at council level and to help shape future decisions.

Each u3a in the East Midlands which has registered to take part in the election should aim to exercise its votes. With two vacancies available, registered u3as should ensure they vote for two candidates, making full use of their voting entitlement.

We encourage committees to check the election information carefully, discuss the candidates where appropriate, and submit their votes by the stated deadline. Taking part in the election is a simple but vital way of supporting strong representation for our region.

Voting opens 17 February 2026  
Voting closes 24 March 2026

## 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.
- Maximum one article per u3a.
- 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 include the name of the author of your article and his/her status e.g. member, group leader, chair etc.

### 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> April 2026 to [maria.newsbytes@gmail.com](mailto:maria.newsbytes@gmail.com)