

newsletter 309 of 1st January 2026

A Message from the Chair

Hello all

Firstly, my thanks to all those who have asked about my well-being after my hip operation. It's been thirteen weeks and the healing process is well underway although I have to admit the exercise programme has not gone so well!

Secondly, my thanks must go to Peter Turner who has, as my Vice-Chairman, done a superb job in my absence. He has also booked our General Meeting speakers for the next twelve months. This month we have Guide Dogs for The Blind, followed by talks on cheese, the 1960s, the Juke Box group and Travels on a Motorbike.

And so, into 2026 we go, learning and laughing, I hope. As our groups grow stronger and more ideas for different groups keep our wonderful Group Co-Ordinators, Pat and Christina, on their toes, finding suitable locations for our membership - which now tops four hundred people - is a wonderful achievement.

The growth in membership requires people to help, and none are more important than Committee Members. This will be an issue to which I shall return in future columns but please remember we cannot run this organisation without a Committee. We shall be losing several of the current Committee, who will have to be replaced, so maybe for a New Year's Resolution you may wish to come to a meeting to see how we do things.

As our membership grows, hopefully fewer people will become isolated within our community. Please, if you know of anyone - an old friend, a neighbour who may need some activity away from home - then invite them to our General Meeting. Just saying "Hello" may make all the difference.

Finally, the committee and I would like to wish all our members a Happy New Year. We hope this year brings good tidings to you all. I sincerely hope that 2026 is a year in which laughing, living and learning with the u3a makes the world a better place.

John Hassall
Chairman

January Monthly Meeting

January Monthly Meeting

The next Monthly Meeting takes place on Wednesday 21st January at EVA, Granville Avenue. We will hear about the invaluable work of the charity 'Guide Dogs for the Blind'. Peter, our guest speaker, will be accompanied by Casper, a trainee puppy. Doors open at 2pm and refreshments are available until 2.20pm. The talk begins at 2.30pm.

Long Eaton & District u3a at West Park Leisure Centre's Community Open Day – Saturday 24th January 2026

West Park Leisure Centre is hosting a Community Open Day on Saturday 24th January from 9am till 3pm. A number of local community groups and businesses, including LED u3a, will be publicising their activities at the event. Our display will highlight the wide range of groups we have on offer and members of the public will be able to find out more about us. It will also be a great opportunity for everyone to discover the services provided by other local organisations. Pop in and see us on the day!



Long Eaton & District U3A

275 likes • 348 followers

U3a Facebook

During December our Facebook page was very popular.

Lots of different groups sharing their Christmas celebrations, fuddles, lunches, days out and even dancing.

Checkout our page for all the many photos.

The most popular item were some photos of an almost flooded river at Trent Lock, with over 5100 views. (One of the photos attached) The path on the left was only just visible. Decision made to walk in the opposite direction, shared from Sue and Les on

their walk.

Another milestone was reached this month too. We have over 400 followers on our page, including u3a UK.

Thank you to all for sharing, liking and commenting. Keep the stories and information coming.

Julie Gilson

Facebook Administrator



u3a Group News

Jukebox Group

December's Jukebox Group meeting comprised a very early Christmas Fuddle organised by Annie Holdsworth, with lots of contributions from the members. We started the meeting with the buffet, during which we listened to popular Christmas tracks, mainly what you might hear in the supermarket, but interspersed with some requests. Just to prove that we're not totally obsessed with modern 'pop' the requests included 'Christmas Island' recorded by the Andrews Sisters in 1946!

We then had a playlist compiled by myself of Popular Country Music. This was mainly Country and Western music which featured in the Top 20, and referred to as 'crossover'.

As usual we broke off halfway for tea/coffee and a quiz, compiled and presented by Wendy Sheehan. This was a different sort of quiz because instead of writing down the answers we had to answer our own question which earned us a chocolate from a box of Quality Street. It was huge fun, better than writing answers down on this particular occasion, particularly when people got their answers wrong.

We then completed the playlist as per normal. All in all, a very successful meeting.

Thanks to Johnny Sheehan for the photos.

Peter Holdsworth

Jukebox Group Leader.





Gardening Group

At our December meeting we had an illustrated talk from Julia Powell of her memories from childhood Christmases spent in Chilwell where she grew up. Followed by a fuddle (where did that word come from) and a natter.

There will be no meeting in January and the February meeting will be a time for planning for the year ahead.

The Gardening Group wishes you have a lovely Christmas and that 2026 is kind to you all.

Janice Jowett.



Gold Card Bus trip to Mansfield, Thursday 15th January 2026

Our next trip is to Mansfield and the journey from The Green to Mansfield is approx. 2 hours; be warned! In order to avoid a 20-minute, uphill walk in Nottingham, we need to take the Indigo into town. I suggest that we meet at The Green, Long Eaton in time to catch the Indigo at 10.01am. This is the first rendezvous opportunity.

If we get off at Toll House Hill, which is at the bottom of Wollaton Street we can get a Rainbow 1, or a the Two to the Victoria Bus Station where we pick up a Pronto from Stand 4, which leaves every 10 minutes. We should be at the Bus Station at 10-50am to 11-00am so this is a second rendezvous opportunity!

This bus takes us right into the Mansfield Bus Station which is close to the town centre where there is an M&S, a 'Primani' (Primark!), a large Costa, a smaller Starbucks, and a decent Wetherspoons called the 'Stag & Pheasant', where we can meet up for lunch. There are also various charity shops, for example RSPCA and British Heart Foundation.

We must allow at least 2 hours to get back to Long Eaton, so need to be leaving Mansfield no later than 3-00pm. The Pronto leaves the same Stand that we get off at, every 10 minutes. We can arrange that rendezvous on the day.

When we get back to Nottingham, we have options. We can get off on Mansfield Road and pick up a Rainbow 1, or the Two to catch the Indigo near the Cathedral at the bottom of Derby Road.

Alternatively, we could stay on to the Victoria Bus Station and take a 15-minute walk downhill to Friar Lane to pick up the Skylink.

I'm sorry that this may seem a bit complicated but, it is to avoid the 15 or 20-minute walk between buses in Nottingham, for those with foot problems.

If you would like to be included in this trip, could you please contact Ann Bennett at annbennett0@gmail.com.

Peter Holdsworth.
Mobile 07887 835185

Drama Workshop

The Drama Workshop group held their fuddle at the last session of the year. It was great to take time out from rehearsals and relax. Many thanks to Sherry for planning the food and the hilarious games we played afterwards.

We've been busy working on our spring revue, taking place on 9 March at Sawley Community Hall. Please keep an eye out for more details in the new year. Happy New Year!



History Group

The History Group didn't meet in December as the due date was Christmas Eve. We resume on January 28th at 11.00 am at our usual meeting place of Long Eaton EVA on Granville Avenue. The subject for discussion in January is 'Erewash'. Appropriate really as the borough may disappear in the next year or two under local government reorganisation, which formed the borough in the first place in 1974.

All welcome to join us for a small fee which includes tea/coffee and a biscuit or even a left-over mince pie! Contact Andrew on andrew.savill@hotmail.com if you'd like to join us.

Art Group

During December most of our schedule was dedicated to Christmas, both cards and views. A fabulous time was had and we did actually manage to paint for a while too. Christmas music, a very large fuddle, poem from Kay (If Santa was George Clooney) and a visit from Santa.

Lots of fun to end 2025.

Julie and Barbara
Group Leaders





Drawing and painting group

The theme for December was surprisingly Christmas with an array of great work from all. Hope everyone at U3a have a wonderful Christmas and a great new year.

PS. Just an additional note of congratulations to Mick on the birth of his first grandchild Jonathan. He is enjoying the sun and his family time in Australia over Christmas (lucky person).

Steve



U3A Photography Group Visits – December 2025

Our first trip this month was to Chesterfield to see the Christmas Trees in the Spire Church. We started off with coffee in Qoozies and then walked to see the Christmas Trees at the Spire Church – St Mary and All Saints. It was a fantastic display. Afterwards we walked into Chesterfield town and appreciated the new revamped market square with its wide variety of stalls.



Our second trip this month was to Tropical Bird Land. The day was rainy but this did not put us off and we all had a thoroughly enjoyable time there. The birds were amazing and quite cheeky!



Our third trip was to Hardwick Hall, one of my favourite places to go. We enjoyed our walk around the house, which was decorated with a Tudor theme and we were given lanterns to light our way.



Gill Hartley

Quiz group

A fun Christmassy Quiz Group for December, plus great fuddle.

Do you recognise the Christmas films, body part sayings,

Other subjects were:

Politics

General Knowledge

Links.

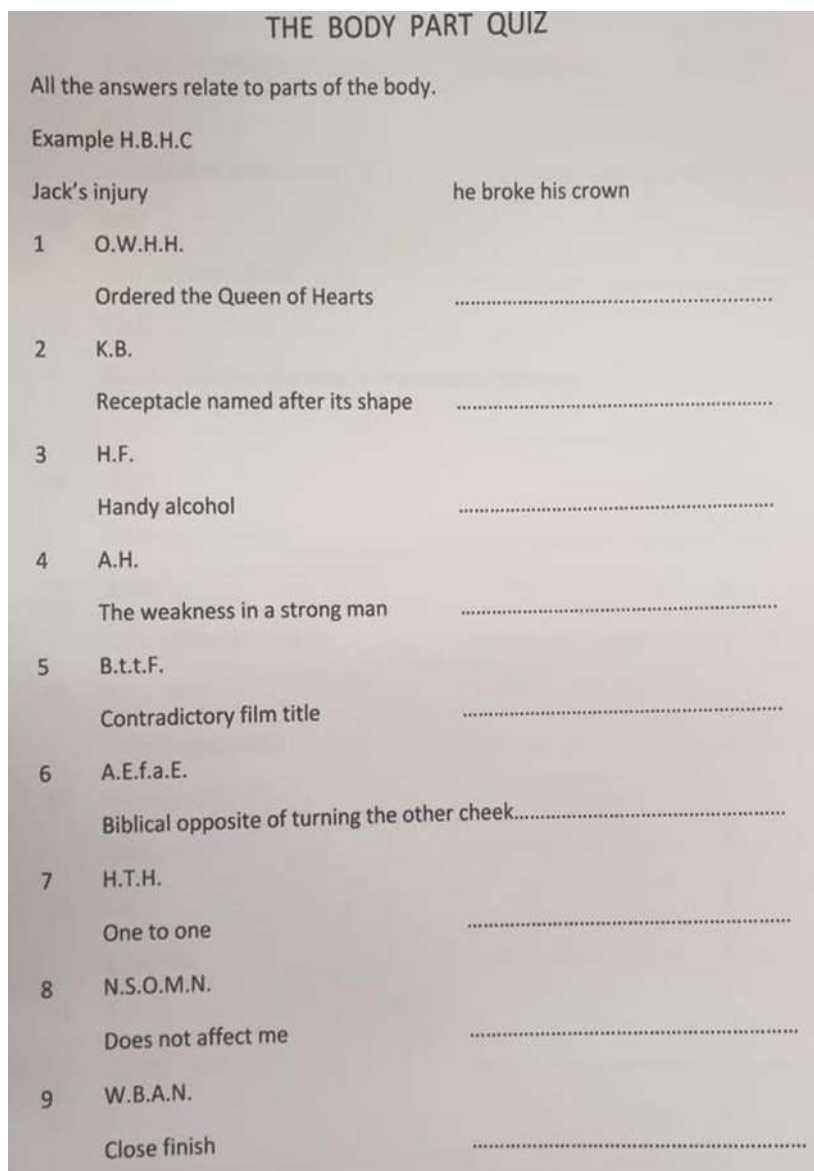
A lovely ending to 2025 for the quiz group. Thank you all for joining us.

The next meeting will be Tuesday 6th January 2026 10.30 a.m. @ Erewash Voluntary Action Centre.

All welcome

Hilary & Anne





Belly Dance Group

The Belly Dance Group has been very busy this year with various performances. Some photos from Sandiacre Lock Cottages, Sawley Community Fun Day and Long Eaton u3a Monthly Meeting. We also performed at our u3a Xmas Party with our two male 'volunteers' Pete Turner and John Brooks, which resulted in plenty of laughs!

Next year we will be dancing at Lock Cottages again for the third year running. We have also been booked for Long Eaton Volunteers Event and Risley Women's Institute. Looks like another energetic year for all of us!

Sherry Dorey-Marsden
Group Leader



Line Dancing Group

Our Long Eaton u3a Line Dancing Group have had another fun year learning new dances with our tutor, Sue Toon. We even did a public performance at the Sawley Community Fun day this summer – where we danced in 33 degrees heat! We had a very appreciative audience, some of whom were brave enough to join in. We also danced at our Xmas party which was held at The Cornmill in Chilwell, and again at Sue's 'special' birthday party which was held on Boxing Day at Chilwell Memorial Hall.

We are looking forward to more dancing and challenges in 2026!

Sherry Dorey-Marsden



Derbyshire u3a Network

To find out more about our Network, click on this link:

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

Online Learning Events from u3a National Office

Our National Office offers a number of workshops, webinars and interactive sessions, delivered by members for members, which are free to join. These are in high demand and spaces are limited, particularly for those with an interactive element.

In January, events include: Mindfulness and Compassion meet Poetry – Friday, January 9 at 2pm – Both poetry and mindfulness create a sense of common humanity. A shared experience or feeling connects us to each other and the world around. It is human to meet difficulty and distress at different times in our lives. It can be supportive and enjoyable to come together and share the pain and joy of living in a creative, engaging and friendly space. Using mindfulness, we become quiet and receptive, experiencing the poem through the body, heart and mind.

How to Build Confidence in Later Life – Thursday, January 15 at 10am – Join Rebecca Ronane and discover practical, doable strategies to strengthen your self-belief, resilience and boost your confidence after fifty. Although she primarily works with women, the approaches shared in this webinar are relevant and effective for everyone. Join us to explore how small mindset shifts can help you show up with greater confidence and energy in this new stage of life.

Why snails might hold some answers to age-related memory loss – Tuesday, January 27 at 11am – Explore how molluscs can help us to understand how we learn and remember, and how they can be used for studying age-related memory loss. This event is hosted by the u3a Science Network with speaker Professor Mark Yeoman. In this talk Professor Mark Yeoman will explore the role that molluscs have played in understanding how we learn and remember, and how they can be used for studying age-related memory loss.

All the above courses are free and on Zoom. For more information on these events and others, please go to: [u3a - Online Learning Events](#).

Sight Support Derbyshire

Sight Support Derbyshire has a growing need for befriending volunteers and particularly in Long Eaton at the moment. The Home Visiting Befriending Scheme was set up to help alleviate some of the isolation that may be caused by visual impairment, for example in a situation where someone has very little contact with friends and family. A Befriender helps in many different ways such as visiting and having a cup of tea & a chat, agreed shopping or outings together, or more practical help with reading mail or the newspaper. Many of volunteers and service users build up a very good, long term, trusting relationship. If you would like to discuss this volunteer opportunity, please contact them on enquiries@sightsupportderbyshire.org.uk or ring 01332 292262.

The Wirksworth and District Short Story Challenge

This challenge was initiated by Wirksworth and District u3a Creative Writing Group with the support of Wirksworth Book Festival.

Entry is free and open to all. There will be a cash prize of £50 and publicity opportunities for the winning entry. Details of the judging panel are still to be confirmed but they will all be published local authors or professionally involved in the book industry.

Entry Requirements

- There is no minimum story length but entries should be no more than 2000 words. They should be new work; not previously published in any form, including private publication.
- They should be complete stories in themselves, not extracts from longer work.
- Any genre or theme is acceptable. If you need suggestions, please do contact us again.

The winner, and the runners up if appropriate, will be announced during the Wirksworth Book Festival in April 2026. The winning entry, or an extract, will be presented during the festival as a printed hand-out or a public reading. (Permission will be sought beforehand from the winner/winners for any publicity)

The final date for entry is Friday 27th February 2026. The stories will be judged anonymously so please do not add your name to the text. Supply your name and story title separately in your email.

Entries should be sent electronically, as a Word document wherever possible, to harding.sheila@w3z.co.uk. If you have any difficulty with this or for more information, please contact Sheila.

Safer Neighbourhood Team

Your local Safer Neighbourhood Team and other emergency services and organisations will be holding an event at West Park, Long Eaton on the 10th of January 2026 at 14:00.

Please feel free to come down and bring the family to speak to all the different organisations.

Everyone is welcome and it would be great to see you there. For more information please contact PCSO Doar on gemma.doar@derbyshire.police.uk

How to make an edible wreath to treat your feathered friends,
From
Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

Make a Christmas wreath for birds



You will need:

- Pines cones
- Long twigs
- Garden wire
- Soft lard
- Mixing bowl
- Holly and other leaves
- Bird seed, breadcrumbs and grated cheese
- Dried fruits or unsalted nuts

- 1 Twist together bundles of long twigs and fasten with wire into a ring.
- 2 Squish lard into a soft paste in a bowl. Mix in bird seed, breadcrumbs or grated cheese.
- 3 Smear over pine cones and decorate with dried fruits and nuts.
- 4 Attach the cones to the ring with twisted wire.
- 5 Decorate with festive greenery and hang up your wreath.

Make sure there's a clean supply of water nearby

Somewhere to hang your wreath

Illustration: CD-ROM which is Copyright © Royal Society for Wildlife Trusts 2010

www.wildlifewatch.org.uk

Please send items for the February Newsletter to Andrew Savill by 25th January at the very latest.

Long Eaton & District u3a members are also invited to send in concise information about future local events.

The email address is ledu3a.news@ed3a.com