

newsletter 318 of 1st October 2026

A Message from the Chair.

The end of a long hot summer is for many a welcome relief. Autumnal weather means the leaves will be falling along with temperatures, so maybe now is the time to get the boiler checked and serviced.

Christmas Day is but eighty-six sleeps away. The shops are already urging us to “*buy early*” but I’m not sure that the Brussel sprouts will keep that long!

Our u3a Christmas Party will take place on Wednesday, 16th December. Tickets, which have been held at last year’s price of £8 per head, will be on sale at our October monthly meeting; numbers are strictly limited to eighty people.

Our September Monthly Meeting saw an interesting talk by members of the Derbyshire Constabulary, including a wonderful cameo role by a young Police Cadet, which gave us all plenty to consider, especially regarding online safety.

For your entertainment at October’s Monthly Meeting, we have our very own Angie Pollard who will be telling us about her life as a comedienne on the entertainment circuit. She may even tell a joke or two!

A big ‘*thank you*’ to our publicity team that seems to be here, there and everywhere at present, together with those mischievous gnomes! We are spending a lot of time, effort and money on publicity so if you feel you have something to offer then please contact the publicity team. If you haven’t seen the latest posting, then go to our Facebook page where information about our forty plus groups can be found together with several “*gnome enhanced*” photo’s!

Looking forward to living, learning and laughing with you.

John Hassall
Chairman.

October Monthly Meeting

Wednesday 21 October 2026 2.00pm–3.45pm
Erewash Voluntary Action, Granville Avenue, Long Eaton

Angie Pollard – Take Two!!

Back by popular demand, our very own Angie Pollard returns with a comedy spot featuring a selection of old-fashioned clean jokes.

It should make for a light-hearted and entertaining afternoon, as well as a chance to catch up with fellow members and hear the latest Long Eaton & District u3a news. Members and prospective members are welcome.

u3a Facebook

I'm hoping that by the time you receive this newsletter our u3a Facebook page will have 700 followers.

Please check us out for September and give us a like.

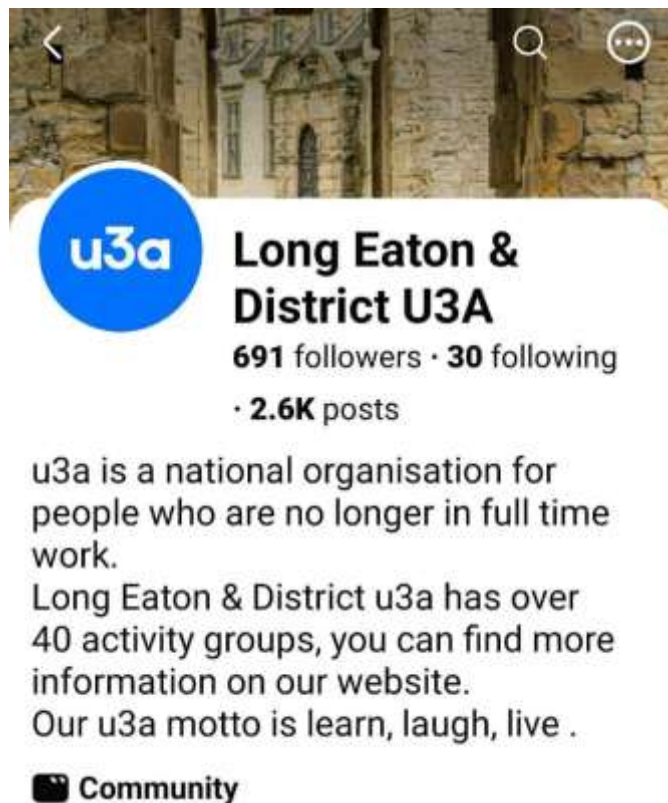
We have received over one thousand views for some articles.

As when you like something, your friends might see it too and give us a like or follow, or maybe join one of our 40 groups.

Please continue to share your articles and photos.

Thankyou

Julie Facebook Administrator



Publicity & Communications

Supporting and Promoting Our Groups

The Publicity & Communications Team is continuing to help our groups promote their activities, attract new members and show the wider community what Long Eaton & District u3a has to offer.

This work includes new leaflets and promotional materials, feather flags for groups representing u3a at public events, a consistent range of group posters, and increased promotion through Facebook and other local channels.

For the October Team Leaders meeting, the Publicity & Communications team is preparing a short presentation explaining the publicity support available and how we can help individual groups reach a wider audience.

We have also started our programme of group visits. Andy Thorpe and Julie Gilson recently visited Craft in a Bag at Cleavers Cafe, and the feature in this newsletter is the first example of the regular Group Focus articles we hope to produce.

These visits will help us build a stronger and more representative library of photographs and stories, showing the friendship, learning and enjoyment taking place across our groups. Together with the findings from the National u3a and Me report, they give us a stronger way to tell the u3a story locally.

Exploring Artificial Intelligence

Long Eaton & District u3a now has access to a charity ChatGPT account. We are beginning to explore how artificial intelligence can support publicity, communications, preparation of materials, and the work of the committee and individual groups. The intention is to use AI as a practical tool to support our volunteers, while keeping members' knowledge, judgement and personal contribution at the heart of what we do.

Your News for the Newsletter

We would like future newsletters to feature even more news directly from our u3a groups. If your group has enjoyed an interesting meeting, welcomed new members, been on a visit, celebrated an achievement or simply has something you would like other members to know about, please let us know. Photographs are particularly welcome.

With more than 40 groups within Long Eaton & District u3a, there is always plenty happening — and we would like the newsletter to reflect as much of it as possible.

Jukebox Group

For our September meeting Ann Austin treated us to a playlist entitled 'Countryish'. Personally, I was only familiar with two thirds of the songs, not necessarily by the same artist that we were listening to.

However, because all the tracks were both enjoyable and typically country, I thought it was something to take note of for the future. It was all quite refreshing, and many members expressed a similar opinion.

Well done Ann.

Peter Holdsworth, Group Leader.

History Group

This month we had a look at King Edward the Confessor, his life and reign and how his legacy led to the Battle of Hastings and the Norman Conquest.

We next meet on Wednesday 28th October at 11.00 am at Long Eaton EVA where Stephen, a group member, will tell us all about Edward III.

Contact the group leader via the website for more information.

Andrew Savill

Gardening Group

At our September meeting the booked speaker couldn't make it but at the eleventh-hour Janet and Paul Barrass stepped up to save the day.

They gave us an illustrated talk about Well Dressing in Derbyshire. Paul, who is a well dresser himself, had many amusing anecdotes about the skulduggery that goes on between rival groups. Apparently, the different groups have unique methods of dressing the wells which are peculiar to that area.

All in all, a great morning and a promise to attend a meeting in 2027 with a different talk.

The next meeting will be on 8th October 10 -12 noon at the EVA, Granville Avenue, when our speaker will be Jeff Bates explaining how to prune climbers like clematis.

Janice Jowett

Plant Study Group

So far this year our 18 members have enjoyed 17 visits to local nature reserves and similar places. It's great to explore areas of countryside, both familiar and new, local and a bit further away. We study the wildflowers and trees using apps, books, and our previous knowledge to share ideas and identify the species. It's amazing what you can discover with the aid of a hand lens. Sometimes we record what we find and send the list to the Derbyshire plant recorders.

Visits this year have included snowdrops at Shipley Hall woodland, Morley Hayes Woods, Strelley Wood, Aston on Trent brickyard, Orchid Wood in Breaston, Weleda in Ilkeston, Bennerley Viaduct, the grounds of the Priest House hotel at Castle Donington, Trent Lock, and the Trent and Mersey canal.

In November, we'll be meeting to plan our programme for next year beginning in February.

To join this group, please contact us via our own u3a website or email pinneydavid@hotmail.com

David Pinney



Photography Group

After the heat of Ashby, the Photography group visited an extremely wet Melbourne. There was a sculpture display in the gardens and the rain made for some 'different' photos. A couple of the group went into the house. Thank you, Kay, for the pictures, the blue one was created by putting her blue umbrella at the back of the statue, very clever.



The next trip, thankfully fine was to Elsecar Heritage Village. The village now has an improved coffee shop, a small museum, lots of little shops and a building containing lots of little premises. The railway is still in a state of disrepair but the village is well worth a visit.



The final trip was Renishaw House & Gardens, always an interesting place to visit. An on-site butcher's shop, lots of roses to buy, a park & vineyard.



The remainder of our trips can be found on the Long Eaton u3a web site.

Lynda

Writing for Pleasure

Members of the Writing for Pleasure group and guests celebrated our 15th anniversary in September with an amazing afternoon tea at Bistro 21 in Long Eaton – almost 15 years to the day after our first meeting!

The group is limited to eight members, due to the restrictions of the room we use in the Long Eaton Indoor Bowls Club, and has always had a full complement of members. We currently still have several members from that very first meeting. The group didn't even take a break during the Covid period, and we continued with our meetings via e-

mails and Zoom meetings, until such time as restricted face-to-face meetings were allowed. We even managed to have a Christmas party via Zoom!

We have covered a very wide variety of topics, both factual and fictional, over the years – with our members taking it in turns to suggest a topic to write about each month; and have even published a book, “Giving Voice”, which contains stories and poems by some of our members. In addition, we have experienced some interesting trips out in August, when we take a break from our meetings, although in recent years these have not been as adventurous as previously, due to the age and mobility factors of most of our present members.

But, as we raised a glass of wine at our afternoon tea, we all had no hesitation in saying, rather optimistically perhaps, ‘Here’s to the next 15 years!’





Drawing and Painting group.

Tuesday Drawing and Painting open table "taster" session for complete beginners
On Tuesday 27th October, the Drawing and Painting group are running an open table "taster" session for newcomers to art at Erewash Volunteer Action, Granville Ave, Long Eaton from 1pm–3pm. This session is for Long Eaton & District u3a members who are not members of either of the 2 art groups currently running, but would like to try their hand at drawing and painting and get the chance to see how the group is run and meet our members.

Due to occupancy restrictions at EVA, the taster session will be limited to 8 people, on a first come, first served basis.

We will provide materials for you to have a go. The session will be guided by one of our more experienced art group members who will be able to talk you through some simple techniques to get you going on your first art project.

This is a free session.

So, if you fancy having a go, contact Steve Platkiw (Group Leader – Drawing and Painting) via the Long Eaton & District u3a website

Try
something
new!

Draw and Paint

Open table 'taster' session

Get creative
Make new friends



**Tuesday
27th October**



1pm – 3pm



**Erewash Volunteer
Action (EVA),
Granville Ave,
Long Eaton**



So if you fancy having a go, contact
Steve Platkiw (Group Coordinator -
Drawing and Painting) via the
Long Eaton & District u3a website.



Drawing and Painting group September Meeting

At the drawing and painting group we continued with the theme of reflections. Some artists took the opportunity to continue with their own projects. We always say that if you don't want to participate with the theme then come along and do your own thing.

Two pictures this time. One on theme and the other not. Both brilliant by two very talented artists.

Steve



Art Group

At Art Group this month one of our subjects was "Traitors". The BBC celebrity edition will be starting this month. Filmed in Scotland, we focused on a few of the surrounding locations used in the production. You might recognise the lake area.

We had cakes and biscuits from Suzi as it was her birthday last week and of course we sang "Happy Birthday " to her (it was already raining)

Well done all, not a popular subject, although they do look great. More paintings were shared to our u3a Facebook page.

Julie and Barbara
Group Leaders



Discover Africa

Our Discover Africa have been busy out and about this month. The first was a night out to Derby Theatre to see the Queen Idia musical production. The history of her becoming Queen, having a baby prince, fought in a war and her possible death. Told as a musical, 4 musicians and 6 singers.

Very well written, produced and performed, plus a Q&A session at the end.



You might have noticed the mask of Queen Idia sat on our row at the theatre, we used ChatGPT to achieve this.

Our second outing was to Derby again. Five of us enjoyed a delicious, freshly cooked Ethiopian meal at Rita Habesha Coffee on Normanton, Derby. Rita made us very welcome. It was like being at someone's home.



David
Group Leader

Quiz Group

At quiz group this month the subjects included: -

Song lyrics

General Knowledge

Acronyms

Pictures

Space

Geography

The highest score was 66

Next meeting will be

Tuesday 6th October 10.30 a.m. At Erewash Voluntary Action Centre

Anne and Hilary
Group Leaders



Craft in a Bag – Creativity, Friendship and Conversation

Members of the Publicity & Communications team, Andy Thorpe and Julie Gilson, recently visited our Craft in a Bag group at Cleavers Café to find out more about what makes the group so enjoyable.

As the name suggests, the group welcomes almost any craft that can be brought along in a bag. Members take part in a wide variety of activities, including pencil drawing, knitting, crochet, cross stitch, darning, mandala colouring and tapestry. Not every craft is represented at every meeting; on the day of our visit, members were mainly enjoying knitting, crochet, cross stitch and colouring.

Everyone is free to bring along and enjoy their own particular craft, but an important part of the group is also sharing skills and ideas. Members regularly help and teach one another, making it a great place to try something new as well as continue with an existing hobby.

There was also some wonderful charitable work taking place. One member was busy knitting poppies for Remembrance Day to help raise money, while another was knitting blankets for a homeless charity.

But Craft in a Bag is about much more than crafting. It is also a friendly and relaxed opportunity to meet other people, enjoy conversation and spend time together.

"One of the nicest things about the u3a is getting together and having a chat."

Our visit certainly showed that Craft in a Bag combines creativity, friendship and community spirit — exactly what u3a groups are all about.



Italian Group – Putting Italian into Practice

Members of our Italian group recently came together for another enjoyable session of practical Italian, conversation and learning. Several members have also had the opportunity to put what they have learned into practice.

Two members recently returned from a holiday in Tuscany, where they were able to use their Italian while travelling, eating out and exploring the region. Another couple from the group were preparing for their own visit to Lucca in Tuscany, and everyone is looking forward to hearing about their experiences when they return.

The group continues to welcome new members, including those who may have little or no previous knowledge of Italian.

It is a good example of what u3a is all about — learning together, enjoying each other's company and occasionally getting the opportunity to put that learning into practice.

Lunch Club

The Lunch Club recently enjoyed another successful get-together at the Victoria Hotel in Beeston.

The group meets approximately every two months, giving members an opportunity to enjoy lunch together at a variety of local venues.

The next Lunch Club meeting is planned for Friday 20 November at 1.00pm. The venue will be confirmed nearer the time.



Other u3a Activities

Group leaders are encouraged to send a short update for inclusion in this section. For the latest information about all our activities, visit: www.longeaton.u3asite.uk

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.

A Busy Month of Online Learning

There is a particularly varied programme during October, including:

Thursday 1 October, 2.00pm – u3a Rewind

Monday 5 October, 2.00pm – A History of the World According to Sheep

Alan Freeland explores how sheep, wool and the wool trade have shaped British history, built fortunes and influenced society.

Tuesday 6 October, 10.00am – Early Aircrew Training

A look at how aviation's earliest pioneers developed the first structured methods for training pilots.

Tuesday 6 October, 11.00am – First Light: The Formation of the First Stars, Black Holes and Galaxies

Professor Stephen Wilkins looks at some of the discoveries being made by the James Webb Space Telescope.

Thursday 8 October, 2.00pm – Darkness on the Edge of Town: Bruce Springsteen and the American Dream

Friday 9 October, 2.00pm – On the Threshold of a Dream

A look at music, imagination and the changing sounds of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Monday 12 October, 2.00pm – Introducing AI and AI in Scotland

An introduction to artificial intelligence, where we encounter it in everyday life and some of the ways u3a members are already using it.

Friday 16 October, 2.00pm – u3a Essay Competition 2026 Award Ceremony

An opportunity to hear about this year's shortlisted essays and celebrate the work of u3a writers from across the country.

Wednesday 21 October, 2.00pm – Keeping Warm and Cutting Energy Bills

A practical Future Lives session offering straightforward advice about managing energy costs and keeping warm at home.

Thursday 22 October, 11.00am – David Hockney as I Knew Him

Peter Webb talks about the life and work of one of Britain's best-known living artists.

Monday 26 October, 2.00pm – Secrets of the Human Brain: Behaviour and Personality

Dr Bob Pullen explores how different parts of the brain influence behaviour and thinking.

Thursday 29 October, 2.00pm – Art Deco Days

A look at architecture, design and culture during the Art Deco period.

Friday 30 October, 10.00am – The History of Pirate Radio

Bingham u3a member Nick Bailey gives an illustrated talk about his experiences aboard the original pirate radio ship Radio Caroline.

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

News from the National Office

u3a and me – The Difference u3a Makes

A major new national u3a survey has highlighted the positive difference membership makes to people's lives.

More than 10,000 u3a members took part in the u3a and me survey, which looked at learning, friendship, wellbeing and purpose in later life.

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

66% say u3a has helped them stay mentally and physically active

45% say being part of u3a has reduced feelings of loneliness or isolation

The report reflects something many of us see here in Long Eaton & District u3a every week. People may initially join to learn something new or meet others, but membership can also bring friendship, confidence, activity and a renewed sense of purpose.

Third Age Trust AGM

The 43rd Annual General Meeting of the Third Age Trust takes place on **Wednesday 14 October 2026** at 11.00am.

The AGM is being held as a hybrid event, with delegates able to attend in person or join online.

Community News

The Rod Stewart Songbook – Duchess Theatre

Fans of Rod Stewart may be interested in a live tribute show taking place at the Duchess Theatre, Long Eaton.

Thursday 1 October, 7.30pm.

The Rod Stewart Songbook celebrates the music and career of one of Britain's most successful singers, with a selection of his best-known songs.

A good opportunity to support one of our local entertainment venues while enjoying an evening of familiar music.

Bullseye Comedy Night – Long Eaton Rugby Club

Friday 9 October, 7.00pm, Long Eaton Rugby Club, West Park.

A night of live stand-up comedy is coming to Long Eaton Rugby Club while also raising funds for 1360 Squadron Air Cadets.

The line-up includes internationally acclaimed Canadian comedian Glenn Wool, alongside Rob Mulholland and Leicester Mercury Comedian of the Year winner David Eagle.

The evening is hosted by comedian Patrick Draper.

Tickets are advertised at £14.50, including booking fee. Advance booking is recommended.

Forever Stars Takeover – Long Eaton parkrun

Saturday 10 October, from 8.30am, West Park / Long Eaton Rugby Club.

Local charity Forever Stars will be taking over Long Eaton parkrun during Baby Loss Awareness Week.

Participants are being encouraged to wear pink, blue or both, and volunteers from the charity will be present to raise awareness of the support available to families affected by baby loss.

There will also be an information point and cake sale at Long Eaton Rugby Club.

Members do not have to be runners to support the event – spectators, volunteers and visitors are welcome.

Ilkeston Charter Fair

One of Erewash's longest-running traditions returns during October.

Wednesday 21 October – Sunday 25 October 2026.

Ilkeston town centre will once again be transformed into a huge fairground with traditional attractions, stalls, family rides and modern thrill rides.

The Charter Fair dates back to 1252, when King Henry III granted the charter permitting an annual fair to be held in Ilkeston.

Today it remains one of the largest street fairs in Europe.

Useful Websites

Long Eaton & District u3a www.longeaton.u3asite.uk

Group information, monthly meetings and the latest news from Long Eaton & District u3a.

National u3a www.u3a.org.uk

National news, learning opportunities, events and information about the u3a movement.

National u3a Online Learning Events

www.u3a.org.uk/what-we-do/events/educational-events

Online talks, courses and workshops available to u3a members.

u3a and me

National u3a website – Our Impact section

The new national report explores what more than 10,000 members said about learning, friendship, wellbeing and purpose in later life.

Erewash Borough Council www.erewash.gov.uk

Local information and community events throughout Erewash.

Love Long Eaton www.lovelongeaton.com

Local events, businesses and activities in and around Long Eaton.

Please send items for the November Newsletter to Andrew Savill by 25th October 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.org.uk