

December 2021

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Introduction from Sam Mauger

Dear members,

I want to wish you all a safe and happy December. **This time of year is often a time for reflection and thinking of others.** I hope you all have time to enjoy this period with family and friends and also to have some time to yourself too.

Next year will be a full and fruitful year, with the 40th anniversary celebrations, also encompassing our first full u3a week as well as working with u3as, as the future strategy is developed with you all. So we will need you all to be fully recharged and ready to go in true u3a style with your ideas and skills in 2022.

Our thoughts are also with any of you who may have been impacted by the storms and hope that you are all safe and warm and well. I am sure the u3a community in those affected areas will have been so important in keeping everyone's spirits up.

As ever this newsletter is a tribute to the many talents of u3a interest groups and members. I hope you enjoy it.

With regards,

Sam Mauger

Chief Executive

2022: A Year to Remember

2022, as you all know, is the u3a movement's 40th anniversary – and we want to make it a year for everyone to remember. National events include the reveal of our 40th anniversary quilt, Picnic in the Park in June, and a bigger than ever u3a week in September.

Michaela Moody, Vice Chair and coordinator of the u3a 40th anniversary, says, "Our anniversary will be about looking forward. 2022 is all about the Future and what this offers to our members."



Your Stories

"Penrith & North Lakes celebrated their 25th Anniversary on the annual Open Day. On a cold morning we welcomed over 70 visitors between 10am and 12.30pm.

The committee were pleased to be joined by 6 original members who started the ball rolling in 1996. While 8 convenors were manning their group's stands, they had queries about their activities and this has produced 22 new members."

-Denise, Penrith & North Lakes u3a

u3a news

Woodcarving at Mawdesley u3a

Mawdesley u3a's Woodcarving group set themselves a project for each member to carve onto a piece of 8" x 8" x 1.75" limewood on the subject of their village and surrounding areas.

The group were inspired by a wall hanging of their local area and wanted to try a similar thing using their skills. The display now hangs at a local school.



Third Age Matters



As the u3a prepares to celebrate its 40th anniversary next year, members' magazine Third Age Matters will be talking to u3a founder Eric Midwinter. In the February edition, he discusses the origins of the self-help movement, battling ageist attitudes, and his lifelong love of Lancashire County Cricket, Manchester United and comedy.

All u3a members can receive Third Age Matters – if you do not and would like to, talk to your local u3a committee.

News from the Board

Chair of the Third Age Trust, Liz Thackray

"The past year has been nothing like any of us expected or hoped for. Most of us have probably got some good memories, but they are intertwined with thoughts of what might have been if only things had been different. **If nothing else, we have proved we can overcome all manner of obstacles and can continue to share friendship and have fun together.**

Some of us are missing those who will not be there to share the coming festivities with us. Others wonder whether this year they will actually see the family.

Whatever your hopes, plans, anxieties, doubts, I do hope that you will be able to relax this holiday season and to do the things you want to do in the way you are able to do them.

A huge thank you to all u3a committees, group leaders, regional and national volunteers, Board members and staff for everything you have done, going far beyond the call of duty."

Learning More About: Wellbeing with Nature with Subject Adviser, Susan

Subject advisers are u3a members who volunteer to share their expertise on their specialist subject and the movement can contact them for advice on their subject.

27 November – 5 December was National Trees Week and so we spoke to Wellbeing with Nature Subject Adviser Susan about connecting with trees.



Learning More About: Wellbeing with Nature with Subject Adviser, Susan

What does wellbeing with nature mean to you?

Connecting more deeply with nature helps us connect more deeply with ourselves.

Why could u3as consider setting up a wellbeing with nature group?

Through connecting with nature the senses are engaged, which helps still the whirring, ruminative mind. Just two hours a week has been shown scientifically to be restorative. Spending time connecting with nature for older people can also encourage gentle physical activity.

Why are trees important for our wellbeing?

Spending time around trees reduces stress, lowers blood pressure and can help rebalance the emotions and deliver mental restoration.

Spotlight On:

Michaela Moody, Vice Chair of the Third Age Trust and Coordinator of the 40th Anniversary



“What is your favourite thing about being part of u3a?”

I’m lucky to enjoy serving on committees which many people just won’t do! So I’ve been on committees of local u3as, on network committees and the Board of the Trust where I’m currently enjoying being Vice Chair.

You are leading on the 40th anniversary: why do you think is it so important?



We are relatively unknown despite our 1000+ u3as and nearly 500,000 members. I think our 40th anniversary is a really important time to achieve more recognition as there are so many people in our demographic who simply haven’t joined us yet.

How do you want u3as to get involved?

I want as many u3a members as possible to take part in the national events we’re setting up but particularly in all the events local u3as are planning: Picnic in the Park in June and u3a week in September when we want to get the press writing up the many things we’ll be doing.

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Headline photos: a photo taken by Belfast u3a’s Photography group on an outing to the city centre, a crocheted Christmas tree by Trust u3a Groups Co-ordinator Chris, a nature mandala created by Wellbeing with Nature Subject Adviser Susan