



Introduction from Iain Cassidy

Dear Friends,

There are a lot of really exciting things going on at the moment at The Third Age Trust.

The response to *u3a Festival 26* has been amazing and we have now fully sold out of tickets. I want to say a huge thank you to the u3a Festival team for their hard work on this incredible event.

However, if you're not able to come along to the in-person event in York, you'll still be able to be a part of this huge event – more on that in the events section.

This weekend, two runners will be taking part in the *TCS London Marathon* to raise money for the Third Age Trust, which will go towards facilitating more learning opportunities and allow us to provide more support to existing and new u3as.

A huge good luck to Sheryl and Clive – and if you're at the London Marathon this weekend, do be sure to give them a big cheer if you see them run past.

With very best wishes

Iain Cassidy

CEO of the Third Age Trust

u3a Festival Fringe – take part in the fun from home

If you aren't able to attend *u3a Festival 26*, we're delighted to share *u3a Festival Fringe*. This is an online events programme specifically curated to complement the Festival activities.

The events will take place in the lead up to, and following on from, the Festival in York on 1–3 July, making a full two weeks of learning and fun. The programme will feature online workshops and talks from Festival speakers with highlights including *How to watercolour*, *The role of women in ancient Egypt*, and *The role of wind energy in the UK's electricity system*. More information on how to take part will come in future newsletters.



friends learning

Tell the story of UK's historic buildings

Today we have launched our new learning activity, *Missing Pieces*, where you can help uncover the stories of the historic buildings near you. Whether it's a place you've passed every day, a building with a family connection, or one that's quietly overlooked, your written or visual record can help build a richer picture of our shared heritage.



Get involved and download a learning pack for your u3a group on [the *Missing Pieces* page](#).

Pictured: Burgh Island Hotel, one of the buildings on the National Heritage List for England.

Missing Pieces Events

To support this learning activity, we are running a series of online events about buildings around the UK:

- [Kingsmeadow House: the inside story of a modest country house – Friday 1 May, 2pm](#)
- [Save Buildings at risk: empowering community – Thursday 7 May, 2pm](#)
- [The legacy of Edinburgh's Victorian Swimming baths – Friday 15 May, 2pm](#)
- [People's Collection Wales: exploring the public archive of Welsh history – Thursday 28 May, 2pm](#)

Now that we've moved into a new financial year, it's the start of a new raft of Trust activities, initiatives and ideas.

The Board has approved a budget that focuses directly on the Trust's strategic aims of supporting, promoting and strengthening the u3a movement, all directed towards the vision of creating the opportunity for a positive and fulfilling later life through lifelong learning.

The budget allocates almost £3m to these aims, with the most significant funds allocated in two important areas. First, a new marketing plan will identify how and where to carry out Trust activities that raise the public profile of the movement with initiatives that u3as can be associated with. Second, preparatory work on a digital service for u3as (DSU) should lead to a design and build phase for an IT system that will prove popular, relevant and useful for u3as and the Trust.

This is one of the largest and most progressive budgets in the Trust's history and all elements of the Trust are determined to turn intent into achievements that can be seen as serious progress by u3as. Watch this space for updates.

u3a supports research on the positive impact of learning

The Trust is delighted to be collaborating with a PhD researcher at *Oxford Brookes University* to explore the connection between learning in later life, especially around helping the planet, and improved wellbeing. [Help support this research by taking a survey.](#)

Bonding through book-binding

At Barnet u3a, members are learning the skills of origami and book binding. They're led by member Sam and follow the Japanese principles of Wabi-Sabi, celebrating their creations for being imperfect, impermanent and incomplete. Sam says, "The results have been wonderful to witness: growing friendship and camaraderie in very mixed groups, members going off and pursuing longer courses in bookbinding, members sharing their own knowledge and taking the lead in newer projects. I honestly could not have asked for a better group of people to connect with."



Living to a new beat

Melton Mowbray u3a member Hughie discovered a love for drumming through complete chance, and now performs as part of a u3a band.



I first heard of u3a when my wife, Anne, and I were out dancing with a friend, Brian, who runs Melton Mowbray u3a's performance group. He knew that Anne could sing and asked her to join the group. So she joined u3a in order to sing with them and I decided to join u3a as well. I found the monthly meetings very interesting and enjoyed it a lot.

On one occasion, I had the car and I went to pick Anne up from rehearsal. I started banging in time on one of the tables. Brian said, 'you can drum!' One of the group members, who is very handy, made me a drum. I went to those rehearsals and banged away in time. Six or eight months later, Graeme who now does the organising of the music we play, brought along a snare drum from a drum kit his kids had had. I started using that and bought some drum sticks and a peddle. That's how we got to where we are now.

It's been quite an experience. I've been finished work twenty years. At the age of 85, who'd have thought I'd be banging a drum with a group of chaps and ladies in a pop group?

We're a nice group, we enjoy ourselves and that's the most important thing. My favourite thing about the group is friendship, without a doubt. I'm enjoying myself and can't advocate enough for being a member of u3a – it's great fun!

u3a
156 Blackfriars Road
London, UK
SE1 8EN

Contact u3a Office
Tel: 020 8466 6139
Email: info@u3a.org.uk
u3a.org.uk

 facebook.com/u3auk

Headline photos: Photo of Alex McNeill from HX who will be delivering an online event about his life of travel on Tuesday 12 May at 2pm; Ludlow u3a's Art for Pleasure group photographed by Stuart Knight; members can get discounts on their summer holidays with [u3a Friends Extra](#).
