



November 2025 – January 2026

Learn  
Laugh  
Live

Do Something  
Brilliant Today



**Christine Garrity**  
**North West**  
**Committee Chair**

Please contact through the  
contact us section of the  
website

[chair@nwru3a.org.uk](mailto:chair@nwru3a.org.uk)



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## Greetings from the Chair

The role of our North West Region u3a is to support the management teams of u3as across the North West.

In addition to running our very successful Summer School, we can offer help and guidance where needed and it would be useful to know what sort of events might appeal to our members.

- Collaborative events showcasing the talents of our members, such as exhibitions of Art, Photography, Crafts etc.
- Networking events with the opportunity to meet people in similar roles or subject areas.
- Workshops offering guidance on particular aspects of running a u3a

We would particularly like to hear from any u3as willing to be involved in hosting or helping organise an event.

Our NW Region is here to support you, so please get in touch with any ideas or suggestions.

Kind Regards

**Christine Garrity**

## Deadline for articles for next edition 6th January 2026

Please note our next newsletter should be in February. We want to highlight the activities of as many of our u3as as possible

With all your Christmas celebrations having happened it will be wonderful to see and highlight some of them, especially the unusual. Please forward your articles of around 200 words and a picture to accompany to [editor.nwu3a@gmail.com](mailto:editor.nwu3a@gmail.com).

We really do look forward to seeing all the great things you are getting up to....

**Paul King**

North West Newsletter Editor

## Regional Website

If you have not already, please do check out our Regional website <https://northwestregion.u3asite.uk/> It contains



information on events, training, information on the u3as in our Region as well as copies of this newsletter

## Do we have your u3as up to date contact details?

Recently we sent out an appeal for u3as to update the Region with the details of your current Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. We had a less than 50% response, which was disappointing.

We need your up-to-date details on our Beacon system so that we can keep your u3a up to date with opportunities in the Region, including training opportunities, Summer School, and for sending out this Newsletter amongst other things.

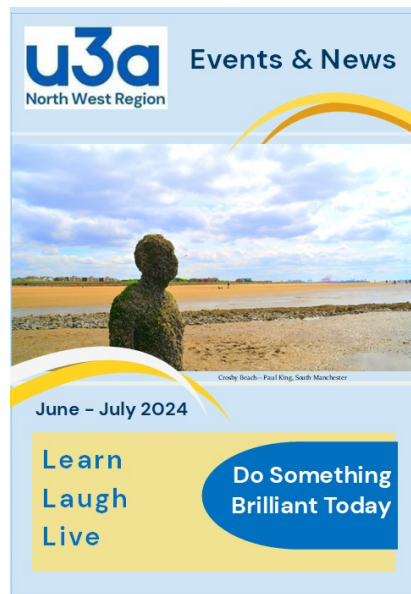
The North West Region exists to help and support your u3a – please have your u3a support us by ensuring each time your officers change we know the up-to-date details.

If you have not already in the past few months, please do send us your committee updates to Mark Bradley [webmaster@nwru3a.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@nwru3a.org.uk)

## How do you send out this Newsletter to your members?

We hope that you value our North West News and Events each quarter. We are proud of our publication which is aimed at every single individual

member of every u3a in our Region. It lets your members know of opportunities that are available to them, including the Summer School. Our newsletter should be an asset to your members along with the national magazine and updates in



letting your members know the breath of opportunities open to them within our great movement.

All too often I hear from members that they have not seen our North West publication and that upsets me for the opportunities they are missing.

I recently spoke with a member who expressed that they might have been interested in facilitating a workshop at the Summer School but did not know about it through their u3a.

Please I appeal to you, ensure your contact details are up to date and that we are sending this newsletter out to the correct people, and you have a process in place for forwarding it to all your members. If I need to add the details of the person who distributes your newsletter to our database please email me their details [editor.nwu3a@gmail.com](mailto:editor.nwu3a@gmail.com)

**Paul King**

Newsletter Editor

**Together we can do more**

## News from the u3as

### Beaconsall

Beaconsall are delighted to confirm that our new 'Website' '[beaconsall.u3asite.uk](http://beaconsall.u3asite.uk)' is now up and running. In co-ordination with u3asiteworks and help from the surrounding u3as of Mawdesley and Aughton & Ormskirk we have put together a website that reflects our community and membership.

It became apparent that our website needed a revamp to better communicate with members and attract new members. Indications showed that u3asiteworks was the way forward in producing an informative and professional website.

#### Welcome to Beaconsall u3a



It was decided that we produce a new website rather than try and upgrade the old one but retain and archive some of our memories in photographs. The process from registering with u3asiteworks to going live was completed in less than six weeks.

We are now looking to build up our membership and offer more activities.

**Thank you Frank For all your hard work in developing our new website**

### Bolton

We at Bolton u3a have got together with two other organisations to create a year-long initiative to boost the health and wellbeing of older people in our area.

Jeanne Kelly, Chair of Bolton u3a, Sharon Bailey from Get Up Keep Going CIC and Mandy Worsley from Circle of Inspirational Calm CIC teamed up and applied to the Bolton Fund via Bolton CVS. Our joint project "Your Time To Shine" has been successful with a grant for £26,365.

We wanted to create a programme of classes to improve physical and mental health and reduce isolation in older people with the activities to be held across the borough alongside retreat days at Mandy's Chetham Farm Retreat in Chapeltown.

10 one-day retreats will run at Chetham Farm Retreat with the first one on 25 November where participants will make a floral table decoration and 4 December, where Christmas chocolates will be made.

There will also be mindful and relaxing activities to promote positive mental health at each one with a healthy lunch and then an afternoon activity like time in the hot tub or a walk in the beautiful countryside around Chapeltown. There are regular classes planned throughout the borough which include yoga, relaxation, painting, ceramics and languages.



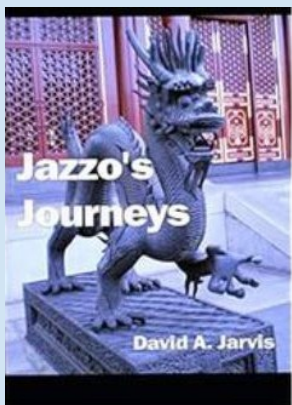
**Jeanne Kelly, Mandy Worsley and Sharon Bailey**

## Chester

David Jarvis, a member of our U3A has just completed his second book called "More Jazzos Journeys".

His first book "Jazzos Journeys" was written during Covid lockdown. Both books feature hundreds of anecdotes from scores of countries over dozens of years involving extensive travel around the world in every continent with the exception of Antarctica.

The themes of both books are Humour, Travel and Science although not necessarily in that exact order as Eric Morcambe once remarked in relation to the notes he played during a piano recital.



Anecdotes include being in Reykjavik during the cod wars and seeing the crumpled bow of the Icelandic Gunboat Thor after it limped back into harbour following a collision with one of our fishery protection vessels. He later dodged militants in the Bekaa valley between Syria and Lebanon and watched on television in Larbert as Greek troops fired a Bren gun at invading Turks from the lounge of the Ledra palace Hotel in Nicosia where he had just stayed.

The book is self-published and available in both paperback and e-reader format on Amazon

## Cockermouth

Even the most accomplished actors get stage fright and "dry"( forget lines!).

When Cockermouth drama group Fit n' Active was formed 10 years ago it's members were...well.. fit n' active and 10 years younger!!

Recently concerns about learning and remembering lines have challenged us to rethink how we can continue to perform.

In our group we have several talented script writers who produce short often funny sketches for us to perform in local halls or small theatres. And we have found a solution to our conundrum because recently we have had some success performing those scripts as radio plays!



To celebrate the club's 10th Anniversary a member Jim Samson has written an outline for a play we hope to perform in February which will require several additional interwoven sketches. This is an opportunity for new script writers and performers to join us..and no line learning required!

So if you fancy treading the boards and joining our friendly group we meet each Thursday 10-12 at Quakers Rooms Cockermouth.

Hope to see you soon.

## Hale

**Hope to Edale** – Inspired by an article in the Daily Telegraph featuring “10 of the Best UK Hikes by Rail”, Tom Fallon recently organised an extra social walk for our walking group members. Eleven of us took the train from Manchester Piccadilly to the village of Hope, Derbyshire.

The walk from there started with a long but not terribly steep climb to the top of Lose Hill (481m) where we were afforded terrific views over Castleton and Hope to the south and east and Edale to the west.



The walk along the ridge to Mam Tor is spectacular, and we were fortunate to have glorious weather and good visibility. From the high point of Mam Tor (534m) where we watched the hang-gliders taking off and circling, we descended into the valley of Edale and repaired to The Ramblers Inn for a late lunch and refreshments – very welcome at this stage.

At Edale station we discovered that our train had been cancelled so we had to wait an hour for the next one. We were made welcome at the Penny Pot Cafe, despite the fact that they were on the point of closing for the day. A thoroughly enjoyable day.

**Many thanks to Tom for organising and leading.**

## Littleborough

**u3a Open Day** – Members sometimes say: I didn't know about that .... In u3a week on Saturday September 27<sup>th</sup> Littleborough held an event to showcase all the opportunities open to members. Space was limited so each of our 43 groups had a stand with a poster with the essential group information. The rest of the display was up to the group and varied widely just as their activities do. Visitors could place a word on the scrabble board, explore the night sky, do a mini-quiz or an Italian wordsearch, play a hand of bridge. It looked colourful and the room buzzed with conversations.

We focused on current members who signed up for groups, social events, outings, lunches or made suggestions for new activities. They found out about national and regional opportunities and interest groups online.



Members also invited friends and neighbours to come to the event. Ten new members signed up on the day and more took away the forms and information. We are reviewing the day to ensure it continues to be shaped by members and group convenors.

This annual event celebrates u3a groups and creates a strong sense of belonging, comradeship and pride in our organisation

**You are never too old to try new things**

## Oldham and District

**Mahjong**—Having taken early retirement I joined the u3a and wanted to learn to play Mahjong. The nearest group was in Bury, which was 13 miles away from where I lived, but I was made very welcome by Mike and the other members. It seemed daunting at first, with lots of things to remember, but like with anything, perseverance pays off, and I



soon won my first game. I had to miss a few meetings with the onset of winter and had the idea of setting up a group nearer to home in Oldham. Our Chairman was very keen and supportive. Once we had found a suitable venue, we held our first meeting in November 2024 with four other people, some of whom had played many years ago. Now we are 18 members strong and meet every 2nd and 4th Thursday at The



Molino Lounge in Oldham town centre. Many members have purchased their own sets and play at home too.

**Jill Morris**

Oldham & District

## Skelmersdale

Members of Skelmersdale u3a were enthralled at their August meeting by member Lesley Grace Boyce telling them about her daughter's wedding in Indonesia where two weddings took place consecutively, one in a traditional church and one Indonesian style.



We were shown many photos which showed the cultural differences and gave an insight into life in the far East.



The ladies then tried on various items of Indonesian wedding apparel.

## Meols

u3a Members from Meols, Southport, Formby, Skelmersdale and Becconsall u3as had an excellent day out at Clitheroe Food Festival on 9th August.



Jackie Carter, a member of Meols u3a and National Co-ordinator of trips along with husband Paul organised a trip to Clitheroe food festival for the Douglas Valley Network and two other u3as joined us. This event which takes place once a year is hugely successful and this year was no exception.



Clitheroe comes alive and there are food stalls and musicians all over the town, The atmosphere was wonderful, everyone was very friendly with members returning to the coach replete having enjoyed a day shopping and taking in the carnival atmosphere.

**Many thanks to Jackie who regularly organises trips bringing u3as together for excellent days out.**

**Open to all who seek inspiration**

## Upholland

**Upholland Meets Cupar** – recently we visited Falkland, Fife which is situated in a very picturesque region of Scotland. We are keen badminton players and searched for a local venue where we could enjoy a few games. We were pleased to discover that the u3a based in Cupar have a badminton session every Wednesday at their sports centre and they were happy for us to join their group.



When we arrived, we were welcomed by beaming smiles. Eugene who is the group leader, introduced us to Steve, who is the groups co-ordinator, Shona, Jane, Joy and John. We all enjoyed an hour and a half of good humoured, friendly, competitive play with some feathered shuttles which I had taken along.

We would like to thank Cupar for such a warm welcome and a good sporting session. And for your invitation to return any time.

**Dawn and Ken Middlehurst**  
Upholland and District u3a

# Skiddaw

## Annual Trip of Skiddaw u3a Cycling Group

**Group** – In summer members undertook their 10<sup>th</sup> three-day annual cycling trip, This year, the group were based in Dumfries.

Thirty-two members met at Powfoot before setting off for the first day's ride. It was a glorious morning: sunshine and wall-to-wall blue sky, although, being on the coast, a little breezy. We travelled west along the Solway Firth coast through the small village of Ruthwell, which boasts a Savings Bank Museum, and then onto Brow Well, a chalybeate spring which was renowned for the presumed healing qualities of its waters. In 1796, Robert Burns visited the well to seek a cure for his rheumatic fever and three days later, died! The return journey to Powfoot went via Caerlaverock Castle.



The second day's route was across a very undulating and remote terrain. Travelling north from Dumfries, we travelled the Caledonian Way – a National Cycle route which made use of old railway lines and quiet paths – before emerging onto equally quiet country lanes. The refreshment stop was at the Bike Shop Café in the Forest of Ae. After leaving the café, we cycled as far north as Loch Ettrick, we marvelled at the extensive and stunning views over the fells. returning to Dumfries via Dalswinton and Kirkton. A tough but exhilarating day!



The final day saw the groups cycling around Criffel. They were well used to seeing Criffel from 'their' side of the Solway Firth.

it was interesting to cycle on the Scottish one. The groups cycled south along the Nith Estuary, stopping off to see the Abbey of Dulce Cor, better known as Sweetheart Abbey. It was so named because, after the death of her husband, Lady Dervorguilla of Galloway kept his heart, embalmed in an ivory casket, with her for the rest of her life.

It was another glorious day, and, as they cycled west, the riders enjoyed identifying the Lake District fells, the coast along St. Bees and the Robin Rigg turbines. Once they'd reached Sandyhills, they headed north and inland, stopping off for refreshments at Bainloch Deer Park before continuing north back to Dumfries.

This year's trip may be over, but its unforgettable memories will linger for a long, long time.

**Anna Nolan**

Publicity Officer for Skiddaw u3a

## Southport

Southport u3a celebrated it's 40TH ANNIVERSARY recently and had specially made cup cakes for all to share and a beautiful Anniversary sponge cake which was cut by David Blanchflower, our NW Region Council Representative .



It certainly was a significant occasion for our u3a, enjoyed by all – and to top it all our Chair, Chris, announced that we have just passed the landmark of 2000 members.

Our u3a continues to grow from strength to strength with a steady stream of new Groups being started this year to fulfil the needs of members, and the establishment of a small group of co-ordinators who will mentor and help existing Group Leaders and new ones coming along, under the expert leadership of former Chair, Brenda Jones.

We are building a reputation as one of the u3as most enterprising and forward looking organisations in the country, working also with the broader Southport community on a range of projects, which helps the community, and the feedback we are getting from both existing and new members has been very positive.

**Here's to the next 40 years!!!**

## Lancaster & Morecambe

We recently enjoyed a wonderful trip to Blackpool Tower Ballroom where we had afternoon tea as well as the chance to dance on the world famous dance floor.

The prospect of this trip had encouraged members who were new to ballroom dancing to come along to some beginners sessions with the existing Tea Dance Group and we have enjoyed it so much we are carrying on.



We are already planning another dancefest next year. Several of our dancers can be seen in the photo and those who didn't want to dance still enjoyed sitting in the magnificent room soaking up the atmosphere.

**Margaret Hemming**

## Southport Flower Show

Southport Flower Show were delighted to welcome over 60 u3as from all across the UK, from the Isle of Skye to Cornwall, but most from the North West u3as and many are now regular friends.



As the towns biggest event, Southport u3a are heavily involved in all aspects of the show from managing the Celebrity Catering Marquees, helping stewarding and information, our Choir, Ukuleles and the Quandary band performing on the main stage, entering cakes and floral displays and the show garden .

A enjoyable time was had by all over the four glorious sunny days.



Whoops went up as the doors opened on the Thursday morning when our show garden was awarded a Gold Medal and Silver Cup for the best Charity Community garden, so two and a half weeks of hard labour were richly rewarded



**Phil Allison our u3a Designer with Iain Cassidy**

**Keep your face always toward the sunshine**

# North West Region Summer School

## Uzbekistan features

I had never been to any u3a Summer School before and, therefore, had never been a Course Tutor. For me, 2025 was the year of the Summer School double whammy. I agreed to be a Course Tutor at the North West Region u3a Summer School in August at Manchester Metropolitan University.

The teaching facilities in the MMU Brooks Building were great ...



I chose 'Uzbekistan – heart of the Silk Road' as my course topic. I anticipated that around ten learners would find the topic interesting. How wrong could I be? Twenty-five learners enrolled on my course! I had a quick review of what information to share and how to share it – and to go back to the photocopier to increase the number of each of the course handouts.

Anyhow, the whole experience was great. The learners were so enthusiastic, kind and understanding to a first-time Tutor. The other Tutors were so interesting and expert in their chosen field. Oh dear! Meals and social events were a wonderful opportunity to meet and chat with learners from all over the country. Even if breakfast started at 7.30 am.



### *Registan Complex, Samarkand Table-top display*

As learners arrived for their first session, they were given a traditional Uzbek greeting – walnuts, golden raisins and folk music (on a CD, not played by family members!).

With introductory YouTube features, lots of Uzbek crafts and a huge range of books, leaflets and postcards – each session concentrated on the four Silk Road cities – Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva.

There was a large collection of traditional Uzbek hats and clothes. Learners could not resist trying them on, with loads of hilarity. Selfies have found their way into a number of u3a newsletters, websites and social media.

**Even the Third Age Trust CEO, Iain Cassidy, was encouraged by the learners to try on the traditional wedding coat – with gold and silver thread, hand-made by professionals in Bukhara.**



### **Kelvin Rushworth**

Trust Volunteer (and one-time Summer School Course Tutor)

**He who laughs most, learns best**



**Council Representative David Blanchflower and North West Regional Committee Chair Christine Garrity talking to u3a CEO Iain Cassidy at the Summer School**

Don't miss our 2026 Summer School which will provisionally run from the 11th to 14th August – put the date with TBC in your diary now... Details will be circulated as soon as we have them.



**Could you like Kelvin, run a course for us based on your knowledge and passions? We are always looking for potential tutors who would be willing to run courses at our Summer School. Anyone interesting in contributing can contact [chair@nwru3a.org.uk](mailto:chair@nwru3a.org.uk) for further information.**

## 6 top tips for staying well this winter

There are lots of tips to make sure you give yourself the best chance to stay warm and healthy this winter. Here are some top tips from the **UK Health Security Agency**.



### 1. First and foremost – get your flu jab

If you are in an [eligible group](#) it's free because you need it. You are more at risk if you have a long-term health condition, are older or are pregnant. (also don't forget your Covid and Pneumonia if meet specific eligible criteria.



### 2. Keep warm and keep well

Ideally you should heat your home to a temperature of at least 18 °C. Insulating your home not only helps to keep you warm and healthy, but it can also help to keep your heating costs down.

There are grants, benefits and sources of advice available to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills. Find out more about [keeping your home warm this winter](#).



### 3. Check on others

Older neighbours and relatives and those with heart and lung conditions, as well as very young children, are at particular risk from the cold. That's why it's so important for us all to make sure those at risk are safe and well, have stocks of food and medicine in so they don't have to go out during really cold weather and encourage them to follow all the strands of advice in this blog.

To find out more, download the [Stay well this winter](#) booklet which contains a wealth of advice to help you maintain good health during winter, take advantage of the financial help available and find out about winter wellness.



## 4. Get financial support

It's worthwhile claiming what you are entitled to.

[Winter Fuel Payment](#) – If you were born before 22 September 1959 you could get either between £100 and £300 to help you pay your heating bills for winter 2025 to 2026.



[Cold Weather Payment](#) – made during periods of very cold weather, to help pay for extra heating costs. The average temperature where you live must be recorded or forecast below 0°C for seven days in a row. You may be eligible if you are getting Pension Credit, Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance or Universal Credit.

[Warm Home Discount Scheme](#) helps low-income and vulnerable households with energy costs. Participating energy companies will be providing a discount of £150 on the electricity bill of certain customers, as well as discounts to a broader group of low-income customers.

## 5. Get on the Priority Services Register

This is a free service provided by water and power suppliers for older and disabled people, or if you depend on electricity to keep medical or mobility equipment running.

**Be well in mind and spirit**

## 6. Heat your home safely

Remember to get your heating system checked regularly by qualified professionals, and if you have open fires make sure they are properly ventilated.



You should have cooking and heating appliances that burn fossil fuels or wood serviced at least once a year, to reduce the risk of [carbon monoxide](#) poisoning.

You may need to remind your landlord that they are legally obliged to have an annual gas safety check completed in the property. Fit an audible carbon monoxide alarm that meets European Standard EN50291 in any room that contains a gas or solid fuel burning appliance.



Clitheroe members having fun

# u3a

## North West Region

**Learn  
Laugh  
Live**