



## Introduction from Iain Cassidy

Dear Friends,

Last week, I had the privilege to visit two large u3a events. I attended the Summer School in the North West, getting the chance to meet members all having fun learning new things together. Then I travelled on to Southport where once again Southport u3a had created a show garden for the Southport Flower Show, this time inspired by AI. These events really demonstrate the great things that happen when members muck in and share their skills with each other.

We're celebrating the legacy of Eric Midwinter in this newsletter, who sadly passed away this month. Eric was one of the founding members of the u3a movement, along with Peter Laslett and Michael Young. We had an incredible response to our newsletter express about Eric, with many of you reaching out to share your gratitude to Eric and to say how u3a has impacted you personally. Thank you to everyone who got in touch to share your condolences.

Finally, I want to wish good luck to the five u3a runners taking part in The Great North Run next month to raise money for The Third Age Trust. You can read from member Rik about his u3a experience, and running journey, at the end of this newsletter.

With very best wishes

Iain Cassidy

CEO of the Third Age Trust



### **Celebrating the legacy of Eric Midwinter**

*'Forget youth', Eric would say, 'it's old age that's the coming thing.' The counter-intuitive nature of this idea appealed to him, but he believed it with all his heart, and never stopped caring about u3a and its future.*

We shared the sad news of the passing of Eric Midwinter, one of the co-founders of the u3a movement, earlier this month. We have collected memories and tributes to Eric from across the movement, including from his close friend and former editor of our u3a membership magazine, Francis Beckett, quoted above. Read more on [our u3a blog, Sources](#).

An interview with former Chair Liz Thackray about Eric Midwinter will be aired on BBC Radio 4's Last Word programme at 4pm this Friday 22 August. After airing, it will be available to listen to on [BBC Sounds](#).



### **North West u3a members connect through learning**

Members across the North West attended a summer school at Manchester Metropolitan University last week, learning new art techniques, finding out about life in Ancient Egypt and discovering literature set in Manchester - to name a few of the topics explored.

The three day event culminated in a three-course gala dinner and a brilliant performance from the ukelele course who showcased their new skills from the week.

### **North West u3a members connect through learning**

The gardeners at Southport u3a were busy once again creating another show garden for the Southport Flower Show.

This year, they took inspiration from AI, demonstrating how new technology will be used in the future to create beautiful, sustainable gardens. In addition to including a diverse range of plants, their garden featured a wind turbine, solar panels and a drone - all things that they think will be used by AI in the future to manage gardens. The garden won an overall Gold medal and a silver cup (pictured) for best Charity and Community Garden.



*Pictured: Southport u3a members with their trophy.*

As we approach the end of August, we'll also be seeing the end of summer. And what a scorcher it's been for much of the UK, although quite a few farmers and gardeners have moaned about the lack of rain. For me the summer has been an opportunity to put my travel pass away and spend time with my family, but already my diary is filling up for September and October with visits to u3as, networks and regional teams in the North East and East of England.

At the Board, work has continued throughout the summer with an online Board meeting as well as informal discussions and workshops. We had a successful Strategy Day in July where the Trustees, Council Representatives and senior staff got together face-to-face for the first time to brainstorm the purpose and vision of the Trust, and how those sit with the current strategic aims for the Movement. Heady stuff, but the feedback was positive, and everyone seemed to enjoy the thinking challenge (although most of us were shattered by the end of a long day).

As with u3as, the end of summer will see us pick up the pace again. There are Board meetings scheduled for both September and October, as we prepare for the AGM on 15 October, and the output from the Strategy Day will need to be distilled and agreed so that messages can be clear and meaningful.

Finally, I hope everyone makes the most of the last days of summer and early autumn, ready to return to u3a business refreshed and re-energised.

## friends events

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### Bring a friend to our online u3a week events

u3a week is taking place between 20–28 September and we are celebrating with a programme of online events focussing on positive ageing. These events, taking place throughout the week, are all exclusively open to u3a members and their friends, to help us spread the word about the benefits of being in the u3a movement.

- Age Without Limits: Celebrate Ageing with the *Centre for Ageing Better*
- Eating Well for Health and Vitality in Later Life
- What do official statistics reveal about positive ageing? with the *Office of National Statistics*
- My gardening life: decades on the plot, page, screen and airwaves
- *Still Got It*: Positive Ageing photography with photographer Mike Longhurst

Book your place on [the u3a week page](#).

*Pictured: Just some of the photos from Mike Longhurst's photography project, Still Got It, which seeks to challenge negative pre-conceptions about older adults.*

## Ready, set, go for team u3a



Rik is one of five u3a members taking their marks at the *Great North Run* on Sunday 7 September. He talks about his running journey and why he has chosen to raise money for The Third Age Trust.

I started running when, in my late thirties, I took stock of my health and realised I wasn't getting much exercise. Although I was never fast, I got hooked, and have since run seventeen marathons and over fifty half-marathons. In retirement, I've been trying to maintain my fitness as far as possible and I have run two "ultras" (each 43 miles) since I retired.

The Great North Run is an iconic race. Everyone says the atmosphere is fantastic, so the opportunity to take part as a member of the u3a team was too good to miss.

I joined Chorleywood u3a in 2017, a year after I retired. I belong to two walking groups, music appreciation groups covering classical music, opera, jazz, blues and soul, and folk. I'm also a member of the Rickmansworth u3a Creative Writing group and Vice Chair of Chorleywood u3a.

I enjoy the sociability and friendliness of u3a and the opportunity to learn new things. Most importantly, when I retired I didn't know many people in my village, but since joining u3a I have made many good friends locally.

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Headline photos: Swaffham u3a's Archery group; Southport u3a's Show Garden; Harborough Welland u3a's Petanque group in the new space to play pétanque in their area which was opened after the group leader's enthusiastic request for a place to play.

**u3a**  
156 Blackfriars Road  
London, UK  
SE1 8EN

**Contact u3a Office**  
Tel: 020 8466 6139  
Email: [info@u3a.org.uk](mailto:info@u3a.org.uk)  
[u3a.org.uk](http://u3a.org.uk)

 [facebook.com/u3auk](https://facebook.com/u3auk)