



March – April 2025

**Learn
Laugh
Live**

**Do Something
Brilliant Today**



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Greetings from the Chair

I cannot believe we are already into February, so this is belated 'Happy New Year' or, if you have been celebrating the Chinese New Year – Kung Hei Fat Choi (I only know that because my son lives in Hong Kong!)

I have had a busy January with a meeting of our regional committee, an informal 'coffee morning' and chat and the 'Trustee Workshop.' Attendance was small for both events considering we have about 40,00 members in the North West, but we had some good discussions and ideas. Members have asked if we can do the chat session again, so I will plan another one for the spring.

After a bit of a hiatus due to a number of factors, we are hoping to start up our contact volunteer links again. This system was intended to facilitate communication and networking around the region and was particularly valuable during the pandemic, but we did not have enough people available to maintain it over the past year.

It is always interesting to hear your news so please keep sending it, with photographs if you can. Do circulate the newsletter to your members or direct them to the NW website to download it.

I would love to hear comments from your members about why they joined the u3a, what they enjoy and what they do. They can contact me on u3anwrchair@gmail.com.

Best wishes. Gill

Deadline for articles for next edition 1st April 2025

Please note our next newsletter should be out late April. We want to highlight the activities of as many of our u3as as possible so please forward your **articles of around 200 words and a picture** to accompany to editor.nwu3a@gmail.com. We look forward to seeing all the great things you are getting up to

Excitingly, we are expecting to start seeing entries from our photo competition starting to be used in future publications—will you spot your photo?

NW Conference and AGM

Tuesday 1st July
Quaker Meeting House
22 School Lane
Liverpool
L1 3BT

We have made some changes to our planning for this event. Originally, we were going to have a group called 'Silhouette' to entertain us but unfortunately their costs were a bit too high so instead, we have booked a speaker, Dr. Steve Barret from Liverpool University. He has given us talks before, including the last two years at the NW Summer School and they have always been interesting, humorous, and well-illustrated.



We will be having our AGM in the morning and our activity/discussion groups in the afternoon. To make this an interesting day for everyone, the groups are not aimed at u3a management; There are plenty of workshops for those. We would be interested in any ideas you might have for the activity topics. Please contact Gill at u3anwrchair@gmail.com if you have any suggestions.



Together we can do more

NW Committee

Urgent message

New Members Required

The NW Region is a registered charity, therefore needs a constitution and a committee. The regional committee is a small team of volunteers who help to support the regional trustee and who also plan events for our members. We are not a management team, and our meetings are always called 'Planning Meetings.'

Without the committee you would lose many of the things we do, such as the interest days, AGM/Conference, newsletter, and Summer School. If the charity had to close, we would also lose our affiliation to the Trust which provides us with support, including insurance.

This year, all three of our officers will be retiring as well as a couple of other committee members. We urgently need to recruit new members so if you would be interested and would like to know more, please contact Gill at u3anwrchair@gmail.com

Peer-to-Peer meetings

Tuesday March 18th on Zoom
10.30am for Membership secretaries
2pm for Speaker secretaries

The NW committee are planning a series of peer-to-peer meetings on Zoom beginning with two short ones in March.

These provide opportunities for members to meet and chat with each other and share expertise and insight into their roles.

Registration links are on the events page of the NW website.

NW Summer School

Tuesday 12th –Friday 15th August
Manchester Metropolitan University
Central Manchester Location

4 days of fun learning in Manchester with fascinating topics to choose from

- **Archaeology around Cottonopolis**
- **An Introduction to Ancient Egypt**
- **Literature 'I have something to say'**
- **Art – A Pot-Poruri**
- **Art – Challenges**
- **Folk music with singing**
- **Uzbekistan – Heart of the Silk Road**
- **Intermediary Ukulele**

Full Board Residential Delegate; £430
Non-Residential Day Delegate: £215

Don't miss out on booking your place!
Information and booking details <https://northwestregion.u3asite.uk/summer-school-2025/>

Egyptology expedition

Ancient Egypt is a popular subject in the North West of England with a number Egyptology Groups and museums with wonderful collections of Egyptian



If you would like to know more about the lives of Ancient Egyptians, there is the NW Summer School with a course "An Introduction to Ancient Egypt" lead by Neil Stevenson, the u3a national subject advisor.

Secondly, Neil and his wife, Joan, will be leading a u3a trip to Egypt for u3a members in November this year. If you are interested in joining the trip, contact Neil at neil.stevenson@beacon.u3a.org.uk

Neil Stevenson

National recruiting and valuing volunteers workshop

March 17th from 10.00 – 12.30
Online on Zoom

The u3a movement depends on volunteer support. How do you celebrate the volunteers who help your group to thrive? This is a national workshop planned primarily for NW members and to be run on Zoom. You can access the registration form on the national website. If you have any problems accessing it, please let Gill know.

Interest days

We are looking for ideas for an interest day this year. This would be a paid-for event which would help to raise funds for other regional activities. For several years we have had the 'Big Sing' but possibly it is time for a change. If you have any suggestions, please let us know as soon as possible as we need to start planning.

Walking Cricket

This has become a popular pastime for u3as around the country. The walking cricketers from Oldham and District u3a would like to arrange some friendlies with other u3as in the NW region. If your group would be interested, please contact graeme_horn2003@yahoo.co.uk.

News from the u3as

West Cheshire Rural

Calligraphy is the art of beautiful handwriting, involving the careful design and execution of letterforms using specific scripts. Each script has its own unique rhythm, strokes, and proportions, requiring attention to detail and a steady hand.

We wanted to set up a calligraphy group, but we did not have anyone with the skills to lead it. Having almost given up, we approached a very experienced local calligrapher for advice, and we were delighted when she volunteered to lead our group herself.



Learning calligraphy involves not only mastering the individual letter forms but also understanding how to set the work out on paper. This includes planning the layout, ensuring proper spacing, alignment, and balance to create visually appealing compositions. Its sounds complicated but the key to mastering it is practice, practice, and more practise, and having the right tools especially the right type of paper and ink.

Our first commission was creating place cards for our Christmas lunch. Everyone in group took part, the only real stipulation was the size of the card we used. We ended up with a variety of styles.

We are very lucky that we found such a knowledgeable person willing to share their expertise with a group of beginners and we have learnt so much in a short period of time.

Anne Bayliss
West Cheshire Rural u3a

Burscough

New Years Eve Party. second year we have organised a party and it was enjoyed by all who attended in spite of the rain.

We all brought nibbles and a glass of fizz, lovely



to see in the New Year with friends.

Sue Ashcroft
Burscough Lancashire U3A

You are never too old to try new things

Mawdesley

Mawdesley u3a Cycle Group 1...what happened in 2024

Yet again it was a very busy year. Our weekly rides went ahead come rain or shine though high winds cancelled a couple and, of course, we don't venture out in snow and ice.

When snowed-off many of us walked over Harrock Hill and down to Cedar Farm for our coffee fix.

This year the number of replacement joints went up by one while for some it was their backs which let them down, one biblical event seeing the owner of 'the back which had gone' lying in straw in a barn with thirty young cows and many more horse flies!

We usually have two groups out on the road, a local group and one sometimes venturing further afield. It is amazing with both that the leaders still manage to take us on routes untravelling before, often involving mud for the local group (!) and to visit new cafes.

Our trips this year began in the Cotswolds with a walk the first day (through plenty of mud) and cycling on the following days on what seemed to be a tour of ancient churches plus one NT property. A lovely trip in beautiful weather.

The good weather continued on our annual tour, this time in Norfolk where a circular route took us to the coast, through the parkland of three large estates (good cakes at Holkham) and through beautiful villages of flint-walled houses and fields of poppies.

October saw some of us go west, and north, to Nether Wasdale from where we ventured to Wasdale Head, Eskdale, Ravenglass and along the coast Sellafield. This was another opportunity to visit ancient churches before the delights of the nuclear industry!



Thanks to all our ride leaders and trip organisers for their planning, their safe routes, and their careful guidance especially when we avoided the dreaded 'white van man'!

Dave & Wendy Tilson Mawdesley u3a



Upholland and District

Our u3a went all out in 2024 in a bid to recruit new members and raise awareness of what we have to offer. Volunteer members were out in force at seven locations across the local area during u3a Week, handing out leaflets and chatting to as many people as possible.

They followed up with an open day, to showcase the group activities. The Mayor, Julian Finch, who also happens to be the Chair of Upholland u3a had the opportunity to try some of the fifty plus groups that are open to members. We even managed to get the Mayor and Mayoress to try their hand at playing the ukulele.



The awareness raising began in April and since that time we have had over 100 new members. We are now focusing on how to celebrate 2025, which will be the 20th anniversary of Upholland and District's inception.

Afternoon tea on one day and an evening entertainment on another are two of the events already in the planning.

In the meantime, monthly coffee mornings and speaker meetings continue, with the one recent speaker being TV journalist, Dave Guest, from North West Tonight, who gave a very entertaining talk about his career with the BBC.

Viv Newman
Upholland and District u3a

u3a Joint Venture!

On a cold wintery evening in November, members from three small u3a's got together for a coach trip to the Dunham Massey Christmas lights. This was led by Jacky from Meols (Southport) with Skelmersdale and Birkdale and Ainsdale u3as joining in. Such ventures are generally not feasible for small u3a but where there's a will.....

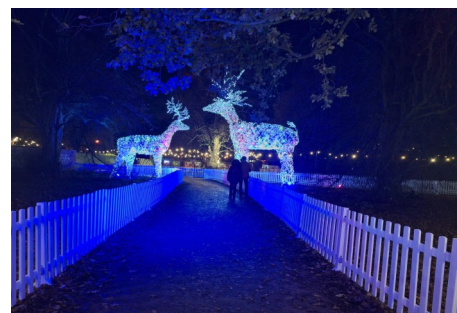
Yes, it was cold and towards the end a bit wet but



the Christmas Lights at Dunham Massey were well worth the trip. It was lovely to meet like-minded folks. The Dunham Massey venture demonstrates that smaller u3as can support wider events when they cooperate. It's possibly a model for U3a development. Where U3as stay small, we cherish our values of being welcoming and collaborative, which are so difficult to sustain when you grow larger.

We already have our next trip booked and a fully booked coach!

Jackie Carter
Meols u3a



Reciprocal agreements between u3as can really help and are especially useful if you have a very small interest group which could be supported by members from other u3as without having to join the main group. It involves an agreement between the committees of the u3as involved to establish a set of 'ground rules'. **If you would like to know more, please get in touch with Gill Russell**

Crosby

The Lost Tapestry – Our Needlework group was the 1st group I joined in 2012. We were embarking on a project inspired by the 'Crosby Plaque' 1716 – (a west prospect of Great Crosby sailing ships on the River Mersey. It also depicts horsemen and pedestrians on the shore, sand dunes with rabbits and a small house on the right for the keeper of the warren).

Our group co-ordinator, Hilary who sadly died recently, suggested we speak to local historians, take photos of old local sites and she would embark on sketches to form individual tapestries.

When Hilary had completed the sketches she transferred them onto canvas for us to work on with wools, using a variety of sewing and embroidery techniques and meeting up regularly to discuss, embellish and try new techniques.



Hilary made the copy of the Crosby Plaque at the top, centre of our work. We individually created 15 pieces of work to be mounted together ready for display in 2013– Completed it measured about 1 ½ metres by 1 metre.

The tapestry was displayed on a wall at CHET, Crosby Hall Education Trust for a number of years where it could be appreciated by the public.

We loaned it to Sefton Council to be displayed for Borough of Culture celebrations in 2020 but due to pandemic restrictions it could not be displayed. We agreed it could be retained by



Sefton Council with a plan to find a permanent display location for the tapestry in the borough.

In 2022 I discovered that the tapestry could not be located. We were advised by Sefton Executive to apply for compensation. In 2023 we received £3,000 to be used for further development work in our Needlework group.

We did not have the heart to start on the same project after 10 years but have used some of the new funds to take some textile exhibition trips for inspiration, and so far have taken our group to the Quaker Museum in Kendal and the Silk Museum in Macclesfield. A photo album has been created to record the completed tapestry, the sketches and newspaper articles recording our work. Copies of the album were made for each person who had worked on the tapestry. We are now in the process of putting together a display of small samples of our individual sewing and embroidery work to be displayed at our local library

Maggie Goodrum
Crosby U3A

Clitheroe

Our Visual Arts Study Group was formed eighteen months ago. The group comprised of a small number of artists and crafters working in various media who were willing to meet every six weeks to present their work to each other; forming a supportive network. The media they utilised included painting, collage, print making, pen and ink drawings and needlework. Most members worked on their own and at their own pace.



The members worked on an agreed theme, that of looking at the buildings in Clitheroe. In November 2024 they displayed the work produced to date at the Clitheroe u3a main meeting. They have now been offered an exhibition in Clitheroe Library. This first display received a number of applications from u3a members to join the group.



The group have now moved on to a new theme, using 'Nature' as their inspiration. They are also preparing a series of workshops for members of Clitheroe u3a who do not yet see themselves as artists or crafters.



These will be offered throughout 2025, and are open to both beginners, and people who feel they want to expand their knowledge of the creative process. The first workshop will be on 'Making Pictures in Needlework' and a session on 'The Fun of Collage' is in the planning stage.



As a member of the group, I have enjoyed the supportive criticism offered and look forward to this continuing as this relatively new group moves forwards. I have included below a small selection of the groups work to date based on their first joint project.

Jacquie Melia
Clitheroe u3a

Open to all who seek inspiration

20 years a National Trust volunteer



David Blanchflower, the North West Region Trustee has recently completed 20 years volunteering with the National Trust.

At a volunteers meeting held at Rufford Old Hall David was presented with his long service certificate by the Trusts General Manager, Rachel Thomas, marking his 20 years volunteering with the Trust.



David's volunteering is on a weekly basis in the gardens and grounds of Rufford Old Hall. His other National Trust volunteering was as a leader of Trust Working Holidays with David leading a number of working Holidays with responsibility for groups of sixteen volunteers undertaking a week's residential environmental work in North Wales and the Lake District.



David spends most Thursdays with his fellow volunteers tending the gardens which are particularly beautiful in February with huge displays of snowdrops.

Congratulations David on your award!

Open to all who seek inspiration

Fairwell, from our PR Adviser



I have been a Trust/Regional Support Volunteer for a number of years, in a variety of different roles.

Without doubt, the role of Public Relations Adviser (in both North East and North West England) has been the most satisfying and enjoyable. Such a great opportunity to make contact and engage with all of the u3as and networks in the region, really helpful and supportive monthly Zoom meetings with the other PRAs across the UK and developing interesting close working relationships with the u3a Office Communications and Policy Department colleagues ... and much more.

David Blanchflower and Gill Russell are recruiting a successor to my PRA role, as I move to other roles from 1 April 2025. Please contact either of them for an informal discussion and a copy of the current PRA role description.

Please do not be put off by this exhaustive (and exhausting) role description. Like any volunteer, you can only do what you can do, you can only commit to the time which you have available. Really, there is no expectation from anyone that you will do absolutely everything.

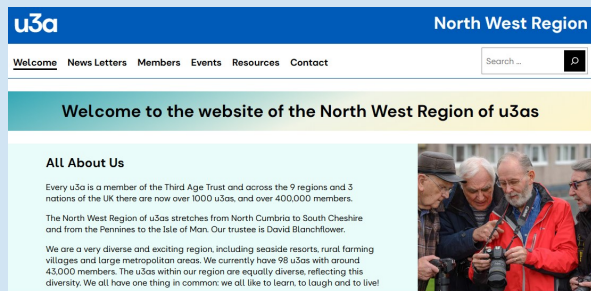
Once a successor is appointed, I am only too happy to answer queries about day-to-day practicalities (kelvinregnat@outlook.com). Goodbye for now...

Kelvin Rushworth
Public Relations Adviser,
North West England



New Regional Website

If you have not already, please do check out our new 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.

Photo Competition

Shine a light and highlight what it means to be a u3a member.

It is wonderful to see the entries coming in and we are looking forward to announcing a winner and runners up shortly.

Entries will be judged by Peter Read – u3a Subject Adviser for Photography, and Rachel Smith – Communications Manager



at our u3a Office in London

The winner will win a u3a cotton tote bag, a framed copy of their winning photograph, winners certificate and two u3a travel mugs. Runners up will receive a runner up certificate. Winning photos will feature in the u3a North West Region newsletter, website and social media.

Good luck to all who entered

Learning is blooming wonderful

Newsletter Editor's artwork highlights cancer journey

"The cancer journey can be bumpy and rough, and that is what I'm trying to get across with this painting."



Paul King's 'The Road to The Christie' is one of ten paintings being displayed at the 'United by Unique' art exhibition at the Oglesby Cancer

Research Building between Monday 3 and Friday 28 February. <https://www.mcrc.manchester.ac.uk/united-by-unique/>

Paul, who lives in Trafford, was diagnosed with prostate cancer that had spread to one of his adrenal glands, lungs and spine in July 2023. The tumours had caused his spine to become compressed, and he'd lost all movement from the waist down.

He had an operation to relieve the pressure on his spinal cord, repair damage caused by the tumours, and help him regain movement in his lower body. His spine is now partly held together by rods and pins.

He was then referred to The Christie for follow-up treatment to try and keep his cancer at bay. He attends drop-in sessions at the art room here and finds them helpful.

"The bumpy and uneven texture of painting represents the uncertainty that comes with a cancer diagnosis and the ups and downs you face. The road is either going uphill or downhill depending on how you see it.

(text and picture edited from Christie NHS Hospital Trust post)



u3a

North West Region

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