

**This month join us at our  
Open Meeting**

on

**Tuesday 6th January**

**10.00 am–12 noon at**

**The Arena  
Ilkeston**

**Our Speaker this month is**

**Paul Sturges:**

**“Experiencing Africa”**

After accepting an invitation to teach at the University of Botswana, Paul spent many years travelling Africa

**Refreshments available**

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#### **Coming soon to our Open Meetings**

**3rd February: “Waterman to Waterperry” by Angela Nightingale. A look into the family life of Joseph Warner Henley MP. From humble beginnings to Westminster alongside Disraeli.**

**3rd March: “Robert Bruce Napoleon Walker” by Stephen Flinders. “It’s surprising what turns up when you delve into your family history!”**

**7th April: Activities Fair**

**5th May: “Teacher, Trader, Lion Tamer and Spy” by Ian Green. The story of the Wheeldon family, who were at the centre of a political storm of feminism, socialism and pacifism during the First World War.**

#### **\*\*\* IMPORTANT \*\*\***

Please note: All those attending the monthly meetings must sign in at either of the two desks at the entrance to the meeting hall of The Arena. This is necessary so that we know how many have attended and, even more important, it is required to comply with fire regulations. If you arrive early, before the signing-in sheet is available, please make sure you return to the desk later to sign in.

Find us on

**Facebook**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1226535837801301> Tel: 07760 966325

## Chairman's Corner



**Hello Members,**

Happy New Year to all! I trust that everyone had a good Christmas.

Many thanks to those who have already renewed their membership for the new year. If you haven't already it isn't too late. You can renew either at the Open Meeting or through the website, details later in the newsletter. Would you be interested in helping the Committee—as a member of the Committee or by being a volunteer (by being a leader of an interest group, part of the welcoming team or by being a STAR)? if so have a word with any of the committee members.

The National U3A Festival is being organised again this year. As before, this is being held at York, 1st-3rd July. Further details will be coming soon.

The speaker at the first Open Meeting of the year will be Paul Sturges whose talk will be on the subject of 'Experiencing Africa'. I look forward to seeing you at the meeting on Tuesday 6th January.

**Andrew**

P.S. Two New Year Resolutions for 2026 for myself: Don't forget to sign in at Open Meeting also don't forget to check how to put my phone on silent!

# Membership Renewal—reminder

**Please do not forget to renew your membership by 31 January.** Come along to the first Open meeting on 6 January and sort this so you can have another year of "Learn, Laugh, Live". I will have forms for you to complete or you can renew paperless online on our website:

[ilkestonu3a.org.uk](http://ilkestonu3a.org.uk).

If you will not be renewing, for whatever reason, please let me know as soon as possible in order to save time and effort. Thank you.

**Jacky**  
**Membership Secretary**  
[membership@ilkestonu3a.org.uk](mailto:membership@ilkestonu3a.org.uk)

## Renewal Season: January 2026

### January Calls

As the year turns fresh and new,  
A gentle reminder comes to you.  
The bond we share, strong and true,  
Awaits renewal—January's due.

Together we've grown, achieved, and dreamed,  
Through every challenge, bright we've gleamed.  
Now let's continue, side by side,  
With open hearts and renewed pride.

Your membership keeps the u3a spirit alive,  
Helping our community learn and thrive.  
So take a moment, make it clear—  
Renew today, embrace the year.

For every voice, each hand, each friend,  
Our shared journey need not end.  
January calls—come join once more,  
The best of us is still in store.



ILKESTON u3a  
New Member / Renewal Membership 2026

Registered Charity Number: 1154754

Full Name Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms	Membership number
Email (preferred contact method)	Telephone
Address	Mobile
	Postcode

#### MEMBERSHIP FEES

I wish to join / renew my membership at Ilkeston u3a and agree to abide by the CODE OF CONDUCT (detailed on page 2). Please select one of the following options:

**FULL Membership** - I am not a member of another u3a. Fees include a £4.00 subscription paid to our national organisation, the Third Age Trust, which provides a wide range of services and benefits, including liability insurance cover.  
 Jan - Dec £22.50  
 Jul - Dec £11.25

**ASSOCIATE Membership** - I am a full member of another u3a. Please provide proof of your current membership by completing the following information and showing your membership card.  
Name of u3a ..... M'Ship No ..... Period of subscription .....

Jan - Dec £15.00  
 Jul - Dec £7.50

Fees are payable by one of the following methods (please tick):

Preferred Method - Bank transfer payable to:  
Ilkeston u3a; Sort Code 30-96-26; A/C No 79570068; Ref: Member No/Surname  
 Cheque payable to Ilkeston u3a  
 Cash

Renewal Form available On Line + separate Bank Transfer (preferred option as no bank charges!) to Ilkeston u3a; Sort code 30 - 96 – 26; A/C No 79570068;

Ref: Surname & First Name (or Initial/s)

OR paper copy via Bank Transfer/ Cash /Cheque.

**Alyson Marriott, Business Secretary**

# WANTED: Committee Members!

## HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF ILKESTON U3A

### Don't just be a member, be an influencer!

Being on the committee is less work and more fun than you think. We are a friendly team dedicated to making our u3a the best it can be for *all* members, by *all* members.

### What's in it for you?

- **Influence decisions:** Have your say on activities, speakers, and the direction of our u3a.
- **Develop new skills:** Gain experience in areas like marketing, event organisation, or chairing meetings.
- **Make new friends:** Deepen your connections and meet like-minded people.
- **Sense of achievement:** Contribute to something valuable and rewarding in your community.
- **It's flexible:** We get the essential stuff done efficiently to maximise time for discussion and fun.

**Nomination form available in Members section on Ilkeston u3a website.**

# u3a Council Representative

## Dear members

It's now been a year since we established a new governance structure for the Trust, creating the new u3a Council to strengthen the voice of u3a members within our movement.

Since then, the Council has built relationships with u3as in their regions and nations, gathered ideas and feedback, and brought u3as together to learn and share from each other. They've also inputted into the development of the new Trust strategy.

As some Council Representatives have come to the end of their term of office, or have decided to stand down, we have several vacancies and are looking for enthusiastic, forward-thinking members to bring their skills and ideas to the Council.

There is one vacancy in each of the following regions: East of England, North West, Scotland, South East and South West. In the East Midlands, West Midlands and Northern Ireland, there are two vacancies.

As a Council Representative, you will act as a link between the Board and u3as in your region or nation – seeking out and listening to the views of members and consulting members on proposed changes. You'll form relationships with local u3as, providing a platform for their ideas and concerns, ensuring the u3a voice informs everything we do.

The u3a Council is still very new, so this is a fantastic opportunity to help shape the role at a time of exciting change. As a Council Representative, you'll help us drive forward the strategy and ensure we remain a firmly member-led organisation.

Thank you in advance for considering putting yourself forward for this role. We can only remain member-led if members come forward to lead!

Yours sincerely

Iain Cassidy, CEO, the Third Age Trust



## Interest Groups Round-up

**Mah Jong** Does anyone else have a game of Mah Jong and know how to play? I have not played for several years and forgotten. I would be interested in helping to form a new group.

Come and have a word with me at the next general meeting if you are interested.



Marian Stopper

**Mexican Train** As usual we had a fun and lively afternoon playing this game. Something almost unheard of happened to me. On the first go of each round you lay as many dominoes as you can to start your train. I was able to lay all 12 dominoes in one fell swoop to win that round. Photo for posterity!



Jacky Wilding

### Golf & Table Tennis

The Golf and Table Tennis groups are pictured, all ready for their Christmas lunch .



Golf was cancelled owing to bad weather, but hopefully it will be fine next year

Table Tennis goes from strength to strength. We just need more tables, which I am hoping will be sorted out for next year.

Peter Winfield

### Tenpin Bowling



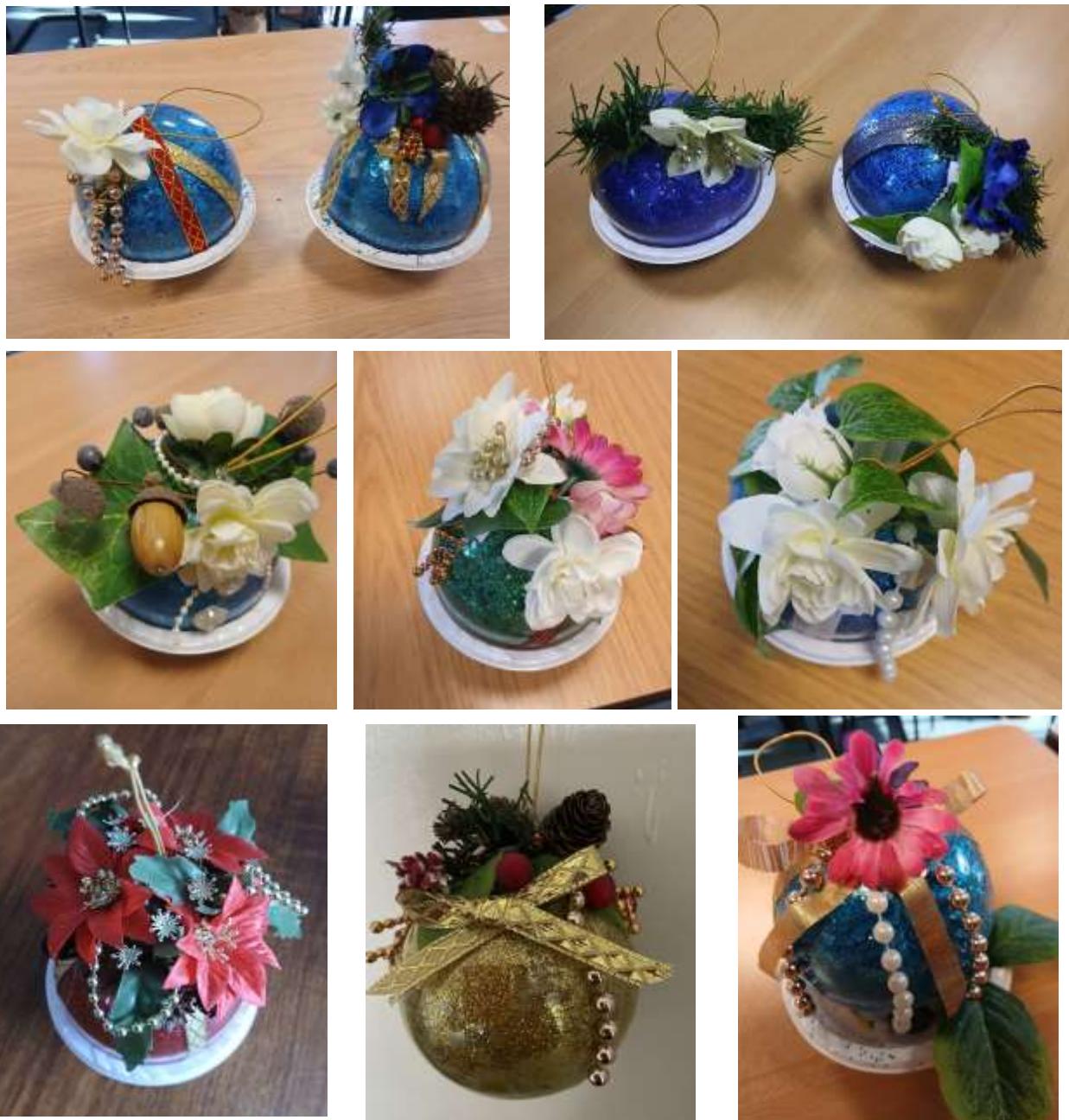
Fourteen bowlers enjoyed a Christmas lunch at the Newdigate, West Hallam on 5th December.

Nick Morley

## Interest Groups Round-up

**Craft** For our last meeting before Christmas we made Christmas baubles. We used clear fillable baubles and, first of all, we applied glue to the inside of both halves of the bauble before filling it with glitter and then shaking out the surplus. Then it was down to the individuals to decorate the top. I think we had some beautiful results.

Another thank you to Ann for her idea. See you in 2026



## Interest Groups Round-up

### Discussion Change of Venue

#### Group

The Discussion group has a change of venue for 2026—we are moving the monthly meeting from the Group Leader's home to the Community Room in Ilkeston Fire Station.  
- So what does this mean?

Much more space to welcome new and old members to the meetings on the fourth Monday morning of the month.

We start our meetings with a hot drink and settle down to discuss the pre-arranged main topic of the meeting, each member giving their perspective, opinion, input or view on the chosen subject for discussion.

The conversations are intended to be lively, informative, non-aggressive and friendly banter is always encouraged.

#### Subjects chosen for the next three meetings are:-

**Monday January 26<sup>th</sup> 2026 10.30am** What is happening in the NHS today?

**Monday February 23<sup>rd</sup> 2026 10.30am** What is the future for the Monarchy?

**Monday March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2026 10.30am** Should the BBC still exist?

On a lighter note, we close the meeting with: '**What has ruffled your feathers?**' - a very short observation, comment, whinge, moan and even a laugh about something that has happened since the last meeting, something to 'get off your chest' and share with the group.

All of the Discussion group meetings start at 10.30 am, in the Community Room of Ilkeston Fire Station, on the fourth Monday morning of the month (Bank holidays excluded) and you are very welcome to come and join us at any of the meetings.

If you would like more information about the group, please contact me on either mobile tel.no 07929 246594, the Open meeting or through the group leader email on the website.

**Ann Riley**

### Rambling The end of an Era!



Our December ramble was the last one with Dennis as Group Leader. We had a huge turn out for a shorter walk than usual, following the Erewash Valley Trail from the Festival Inn in Trowell, towards the garden centre, then around towards Strelley, returning via the Trail. We ended with a very jovial meal at the pub, where a few much-missed, former rambling friends, who are no longer members of u3a, joined us. The noise level was great! After the meal, it seemed a little odd that no one seemed in any hurry to leave—until two members appeared bearing gifts and a card signed by everyone. Colin said a few words on behalf of the group and Dennis responded, with a tear in his eyes! It's been a fantastic ten years and we have made many friends. At the moment the Rambling Group has halted. It might start again, if anyone else would like to take up the leadership. Meanwhile, on behalf of Dennis, thank you to everyone who has ever walked with us. It's been a great pleasure. (Picture taken earlier in the year)

**Janis Henshaw**

## Interest Groups Round-up

### **Book Book Group 2 has two vacancies**

**Group** Happy New Year everyone! As we are in the middle of winter why not start reading a book each month and discussing it with a small group of friendly U3A members? We meet on the last Tuesday of every month in members' homes at 2pm.

#### **Recent books we have enjoyed include -**

Year of Wonders by Geraldine Brooks

The Only Story - Julian Barnes

The Mother - T M Logan

Persuasion - Jane Austen

The Case of the Married Woman - Antonia Frazer

Sometimes we read non-fiction too. Books are borrowed from the library. At every meeting we have refreshments and a social chat.

Come along and enjoy the friendship.

**Please contact me via the Ilkeston u3a website and I will provide my contact details.**

**David Storer**

**Garden Group** In October we had an informal meeting at the Community Room in the form of a plant swap. There was a good selection of plants and cuttings brought along and it was a most successful and enjoyable meeting—which also included coffee and refreshments – always adds to the enjoyment!

**For the November meeting** which was the last for 2025 we again met in the Community Room. Barbara G organised a quiz, which was challenging to say the least, but produced some worthy winners. Members also brought along a selection of goodies which made up a lovely fuddle and helped to fuel our brains for ideas for the 2026 programme. I think we should have a good programme again for 2026—hopefully, if I can muster together the necessary speakers etc required!



I wish to thank members who have supported the Group throughout 2025 and look forward to meeting up again on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2026. Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

**Barbara Bailey**

## National Trust Walks

### For East Midlands u3a's, if you are interested:

The National Trust team at the Belton Estate near Grantham, Lincolnshire has offered East Midlands u3a's the opportunity to undertake bespoke walks on Belton Estate and the local area. Dates to be confirmed.

The suggested walks are:

- **Belton Landscape – Geology, History and Nature**
- **Military History Walk – Belton Estate**
- **Historical Walk Around Grantham**

All walk leaders are trained by the **National Trust Walk Leader Team**, and some have additional qualifications.

Free access to the Belton Estate and car park is included in the Landscape and Military History walks, for which there is likewise no charge.

Although this generous offer is likely at first sight to appeal mainly to walkers in u3as based in the Grantham area, it ought also to be of interest to u3a activity groups such as STEM, geology, archaeology, environment, natural world, Earth sciences, military and local history and genealogy, to name but a few.

**Enquiries to John P Beirne BSc (Hons), CEng, Walk Leader Co-ordinator – Belton Estate**

**Tel: 07843 488 874      E-mail [john.beirne1@icloud.com](mailto:john.beirne1@icloud.com)**



*Free image by Pixabay*

## U3a Festival 26 Updates



# Gearing up for u3a Festival 26

Dear Alyson

We're excited to welcome you to another u3a Festival in 2026. There will be workshops, talks, sports and so much more, run by talented u3a members. It will once again be taking place at the University of York, this time between 1-3 July.

I wanted to get in touch before the end of the year to give you an update on festival tickets and room bookings. We really appreciate your patience as we've been working on this. We are nearly there! Our aim now is to get everything ready to go early next year. As soon as we have definite dates, you'll be the first to know.

We're looking for members to help at the Festival by leading workshops, giving talks or offering musical performances - so if you have a passion or talent you could share, please get in touch by emailing [festival@u3a.org.uk](mailto:festival@u3a.org.uk).

Very best wishes,

Margaret and the Festival team  
Angie, Bob, Glenys, Julie, Karen, Pat, Philip, and Sarah