

Wimborne u3a Newsletter

Editor: Vic Grayson

Summer 2025

Hello all, and welcome to our Summer 2025 Newsletter

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Chair's Message

Welcome to the Summer edition of our newsletter. The production of the newsletter has passed to new hands as Mike Twomey, who did the previous newsletters this year, has had to step down, but we have an able replacement in our Vice Chair, Vic Grayson.

Looking back, I think we had a successful start to the New Year, with a few new arrivals and one new course – Mindfulness – starting. We know that there is a lot of interest in what I can refer to as the personal development field and we hope we can offer new courses of a similar type. As we look ahead to the new year in September, we are very keen to hear from any members who feel they would like to offer their experience and knowledge to put on a class or course. This needn't be a whole year project but maybe something for a term. Anyway, please feel free to contact me if you have any ideas.

Your Committee has been very busy since Christmas, finalising the new policy documents and draft constitution. We have also implemented the Health and Safety policy requirements for risk assessment for all our activities. This a requirement in order for us to ensure that we are compliant with, and protected by, the u3a national insurance policy.

We are now looking ahead to the Summer and we plan to have a new promotional campaign to attract new members. For you who are already members, the main change is going to be in the system of application which is going online. There will be more information about this coming through from your Committee. We are also working with the convenors to make sure the changeover is as seamless as possible. We will still have an option for postal application as before.

As I write, we are in the middle of a fantastic spell of sunny weather. It feels in stark contrast to the news, however. However, we are very lucky to live where we do, and have the opportunities to get the most out of life. u3a will always be a place of comfort and fun for us. Long may it last.

Ashley Rowlands



Convenors Meeting – 26 March

We had a very good turn out at The Reef, Colehill meeting. Some convenors were unable to attend but we hope to see them at the next one in July. Thanks to all those who did attend, as it's always useful for the Committee to have that face-to-face contact.

Chair Ashley Rowlands in his welcoming speech briefly outlined some of the work and progress of the Committee and the plans leading up to enrolment for the 2025/26 year.

So far this year we have:

- Updated the Policy documents required by u3a national – these can be found on the website
- Updated the three Handbooks for Members, Convenors and Committee. These will be distributed for September 2025
- Reviewed the Constitution in line with u3a national guidelines, to be ratified at the next AGM
- Developed new risk assessment procedures
- Introduced termly Convenors meeting and information sessions
- Introduced termly Newsletters for members

Now we are moving to prepare for the new year. There are two main aspects to this:

1. Our promotional drive to raise profile, thereby encouraging new course providers and membership
2. We have produced new publicity materials for distribution all over the catchment area. Convenors have been contacted to help by posting leaflets on any notice boards in the vicinity of where they live. These leaflets will be used for general information, but also customised for specific promotions eg talks, events

Additionally, we will be:

- Advertising in the local publications
- Organising Information events eg Open Day, Library drop-ins
- Developing some social media presence
- Revamping our website.

Given our limited resources (people power) we will be focusing on the first three – the social media and website development will come as and when we have the capacity. We will also continue to produce a newsletter three times a year. The next will be out to coincide with the start of the Summer term.

The introduction of the online application process.

Quite some time was taken discussing this new process and answering questions from Convenors as to how it will work. Rather than try to summarise this discussion here, we will be producing a separate information sheet in the near future explaining everything.

However, there were some immediate items which we would like you to attend to:

- Any changes required to the text of courses or activities, that will go into the new 2025–26 Programme Booklet.
- Familiarity and confidence with our online Beacon administration website as this will be integral to the online application process. Alan Pickering will soon be providing guidance materials and other forms of support.
- Risk Assessment and Health forms. We will get a definitive answer and factor this in to the preparations for the new academic year.

Ashley concluded by thanking the Committee for their hard work, and, as ever, extended his thanks to all convenors for providing such a valuable and valued service to our members.



In Memoriam

We have received this message from the daughters of Lola Honeyman, a former member and convenor of Wimborne u3a.

"Some members may remember Lola Honeyman, who lived at Pamphill and led the u3a Scrap Book group in Wimborne for several years.

She had been ill for nearly a year and recently died at home with her family and beloved cat beside her.

Her funeral took place at Harbour View Crematorium on Wednesday April 9th."

Three u3a Activities for your consideration....

World Affairs Since 1945

This group, led by Mark Healy, is one of the most popular groups we have in Wimborne u3a.

Mark is a retired history teacher and author of several books ranging from the ancient Assyrians to the second world war, with a special interest in tanks.

Each week Mark delivers an engaging commentary on an aspect of world history since 1945, giving a new perspective on many issues that members of the group would have lived through themselves.

Mark uses quotes, pictures and video to illustrate his talks, creating vivid images in the minds of those who attend.



Walking Group

On the first Monday of each month, it is our pleasure to lead our happy band of walkers through 4 to 6 miles of the delightful Dorset countryside. Although most our walks are in Dorset we have been known to stray into the New Forest. Wherever possible we try to avoid stiles and steep inclines which can tax our ageing bodies.

This year we have trodden paths in the Purbecks, in Bere Regis and Pentridge on the Hampshire border, as well as those closer to Wimborne. In the spring time we try and find walks with displays of snowdrops, bluebells and other seasonal flowers.

One of the most important parts of the walk is the lunch afterwards. As well as using the local public houses we go to those golf clubs which offer a welcome to all, and good value food.

We started our group some ten years ago because all the walking groups were full, as is ours today.

If you like walking, and the company of like minded people, why not consider starting another u3a walking group? We are always happy to share our walks, and are sure you will find it as rewarding as we have.



u3a Monthly Quiz Nights

On the first Tuesday of each month some 30 to 40 members meet at the Royal British Legion for a light hearted quiz.

Some members come as ready made teams of six, while others come individually or as couples and create their own teams on the night.

Seven rounds on "specialist" subjects are punctuated with card bingo, birthdays (teams have to guess the age of 5 well known people) and distinctly average where they answer to a random question such as "How many telephone boxes are there in Dorset?"



These are supplemented by the table round of twenty pictures which have to be identified. On one occasion teams had to identify 20 chocolate bars from photos of their cross section.

Add in the use of their joker and each team gets a score out of 100. The winning team as well as getting a cash prize are asked to set the questions for the next quiz. Some teams try very hard to come second!

The highlight for some members is the raffle where 3 or 4 people go home richer than when they came. And of course on the night the quiz masters' answers are always right!

From Deirdre Bartley

Convenor, Italian Self-Help group

Caio, Salut, Hola, Guten Tag, Bonjour, Goddag.....

Why do British people seem so reluctant to learn a foreign language? It's not a criminal offence if you forget when to use a subjunctive or get confused with direct and indirect objects. It's all about communication and learning about other cultures. What's not to like about appreciating an Aperol Spritz and a bowl of al dente spaghetti in Italy or un bon verre de vin et du fromage in France etc ? It's even better when you can successfully order what you would like in the native language. There are plenty of resources available on line etc these days to help with those sort of transactions but to have a conversation you need someone to talk to and with.

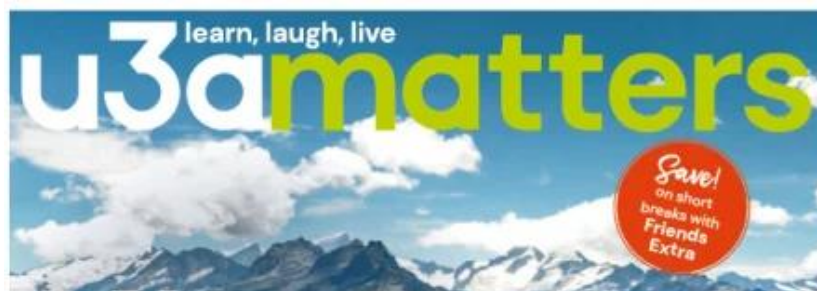
The u3a self-help language groups offer that opportunity. It's a shame we haven't got a native language teacher to run the group and of course there are "False Friends" and occasions when someone makes a "howler" of a mistake but we help each other out and hopefully learn from our mistakes.

I have found being a member of the Italian self-help group has given me the opportunity to practise, use and improve my language skills with a group of like-minded people with an enthusiasm and interest in all things Italian. So much so that I was encouraged to take it one step further and recently spent a week in Italy on a language and culture course which was very stimulating. The other participants were all u3a style "mature" students from all over the world so communication even outside the lessons was in Italian. Challenging but a great way to improve fluency even just for a week.

So we continue to keep up and improve our language skills for those cherished visits to Italy. As Kate Adie says on "From our own Correspondent" every Saturday morning on Radio 4, "Do join us".

u3a matters Issue 66 Spring 2025

Not every member receives the national u3a magazine, so here are a few clips from the latest edition:



Get set for u3a week – save the date!

20–28 September 2025

u3a Week is an annual event to showcase the activity, learning and fun which takes place across the movement every day. Stay tuned for updates.

You can read about how u3as celebrated last year on the u3a blog: [Sources](#).

Online learning events

u3a runs a programme of web talks, workshops and events, as well as online competitions, memory collections and puzzles for you to get involved in, eg:

- u3a Factual Essay Competition (1000 words or fewer)
- Get to know your device. Learn how to adapt your phone, computer or tablet in this talk from AbilityNet. Tuesday 13th May, 2pm.
- Contact: learning@u3a.org.uk if you require assistance accessing any activity or would like help to set up a Learning Activity or Give A Talk
- There are 3 very interesting 'Stories to Share' from u3a members across the country ranging from post-WW2 experiences, a trip to Borneo to see orangutans and 'Putting On a Show' – the realisation of a childhood dream.
- 'Your Good Health' – articles on Wellbeing, Cramp conditions and Parkinson's in focus.
- 'What's On' – Film and TV reviews + details how to access the highly interesting, provocative and popular podcast 'The Rest Is Politics' with Rory Stewart and Alastair Campbell, using Amazon, Spotify, Apple or Audible.

Plans for Membership Application and Renewals 2025–26

Here is some further information about our plans for membership applications and renewals for our next u3a year, starting this autumn.

You will have heard that we will be offering an online way for membership renewals and for new member applications. In addition, members will be able to join groups online, as long as there are spaces available. We will be providing further information about this nearer enrolment time.

Although on line will be the preferred method for renewals next year, a paper based method will still be available for those unable to renew on line.

Several convenors already use our Beacon membership database for things like viewing lists of their members and sending emails to their groups. We would now like to encourage every convenor to set up access to Beacon, as this will allow you to view your group's members as they join next year. Any convenors who haven't yet signed up for Beacon will soon receive an individual email with full instructions and a temporary password.

Soon we will also be contacting all members and introducing them to the 'Members Portal', which is the part of Beacon that will be used for all this process.

A plea from The Editor

- In future editions of the Newsletter, we would like to 'Spotlight' YOUR courses/subjects – that includes photos (of course!) This can be done by a member or convenor of the class or by a visit from the Editor.
- The Committee would like YOUR ideas and suggestion on new courses AND new convenors. It's still not too late for next year's Programme!

And finally

A Maths challenge from u3a matters: 37 is an example of a prime number because it is a positive integer with exactly two factors (1 and 37).

Question: If the sum of two consecutive prime numbers is 100, what are they?

STOP Press!

New Pickleball group – Convenor needed.

There is an opportunity for Wimborne u3u to start a Pickleball** group from the Autumn Term 2025. Various afternoon venues are available.

Heather Lowe is happy to help the convenor until the group becomes established.

If you interested in helping, please contact Heather on 07765 833289

** Pickleball is a fun sport that combines elements of badminton, tennis and table tennis. Played both indoors or outdoors on a badminton-sized court with a slightly modified tennis net. Two or four players use solid paddles made of wood or composite materials to hit a perforated polymer ball over the net.

