

MESSAGE FROM CHRIS NIVEN, CHAIR OF THE NETWORK

Dear Members,

I hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying the lighter nights and spring flowers emerging. As I am writing this (in March) I can see a tiny patch of evidence of the snow that descended last week and prevented us venturing far from home. We have Easter already upon us, hopefully we will have a sunny weekend. Don't eat too many Easter eggs!

I am pleased to let you know that one of our members, John Lewis of Bingham has been successful in being appointed as Regional Trustee. We look forward to working with John in the future and wish him all the best in his new role.



If you haven't done so you can get further information on the Trust website about many issues. Registration is easy and anybody can register. There are lots of free online workshops and presentations you can access also updates on the proposed changes to the structure and organisation of the Trust. At the end of this newsletter you will find some examples of online sessions.

And now, calling all interested members – I would like to invite you to join the Third Age Trust workshop entitled "Keeping It Legal" on 24 May 2023. This workshop is not just for committee members and prospective committee members but for all members who have an interest in learning about some of the formalities which u3as have to follow. Full details on page 13.

Stay safe and warm everyone and I look forward to seeing your u3a representative at our April meeting.

Best wishes
Chris Niven
Chair Nottinghamshire Network of u3as

SOUTHWELL u3a

Minster School wows Southwell u3a members

At their February meeting, members of Southwell u3a were treated to insightful presentations from pupils of the Minster School's leadership team.

The students were challenged with speaking on topics that concern them in today's world. Their choice of subjects included a comparison of life in India's Punjab with life in the UK, theoretical physics, the digital revolution and gender and sexuality in modern Western society. In addition, there was a 'no holds barred' address on the subject of whether our royal family has a future.

It was refreshing for u3a members to be able to compare their opinions with those of the speakers, and the questions posed afterwards demonstrated their appreciation of some differing viewpoints and their admiration of the team's ability to tackle some subjects which were both difficult and controversial.

In recent years, presentations by the school have become established as a very popular annual event in the u3a's calendar and hopefully they will be able to repeat the experience again next year.



Over the coming months, u3a members will hearing talks about herbal medicines, spells and folklore in medieval times, one couple's story of how they created a spectacular garden from a patch of wasteland - and the subject of lady drivers and pre-war motoring, which promises to raise a smile. Then there's the storytellers from Southwell Workhouse, who enthusiastically share tales of the building's past occupants. A pretty varied and interesting programme for all!

Tony Mellor

RETFORD u3a

It has been a busy Spring for Retford U3A Interest Groups with lots of trips planned as the weather turns warmer and we no longer must cope with Covid regulations. Our quarterly U3A Big Nights Out are proving hugely popular. The next one is on April 14th at Retford Golf Club, but, if you haven't already booked, you would do better looking out for the July event.

Military History have four trips planned over the Summer. They are visiting the RAF Museum at Cosford in April. In June they are going to Leeds Armoury, July to Eden Camp Living Museum and in September to Bletchley Park. Information on all the trips are on our Retford u3a website, under Events, or you can come to a meeting as a new member.

All of our walking groups have come together to reinstate the walking groups yearly outing. This year we plan to go to Knaresborough on July 3. They will start taking bookings, plus the charge of £12 per person, at upcoming Moderate and Striders Walks and at general meetings. In the first instance places will be available to those members on the present lists for the Strollers, Moderate, and Striders walking groups. Non walking partners and friends can be considered after May 22, if places remain on the coach.



Meanwhile, closer to home our Water Colours and Photography Groups have announced best-of-show winners for March.



Space does not allow us to show all winners, but we are pleased to illustrate the high quality of entries on the themes of *Winter Trees* and *Seating* respectively.

Bryan Gladstone
Chairman

BINGHAM u3a

BINGHAM u3a HOLIDAY TO CHESTER AND WALES

Nineteen members went on this holiday which was organised by Pat Ancliffe from Bingham u3a using Emjay tours coach and staying at the Beaufort Park Hotel near Mold. Here we have an account of their soggy holiday.



Monday 13th March, stepped out for the bus in pouring rain. On the bus, and we set off to cheery greetings and the usual weather comments. We arrived at the hotel in Chester bringing the rain with us.

The Hotel was magnificent, everywhere you looked was an antique or quirky. Then came time to find our rooms. The dinner made for everything.

Tuesday 14th March, we had a Blue Badge guide come aboard, and entertained us royally with information about the town and some interesting villages, and corny jokes. Then back to Chester, some walked into town not many as it was raining.

Wednesday 15th March, we were off for a scenic drive through the hills through Rhos-on-sea, Penrhyn and past the Little and Great Orme to Llandudno. There were plenty of shops under cover to explore. Oh did I mention it was raining.

Thursday 16th March, we drove inland to Llangollen. We then rode over the Horseshoe pass and saw most of it as um-it was raining. We passed through Ruthin and through the Clwydion hills into Mold and back to base, in the rain.



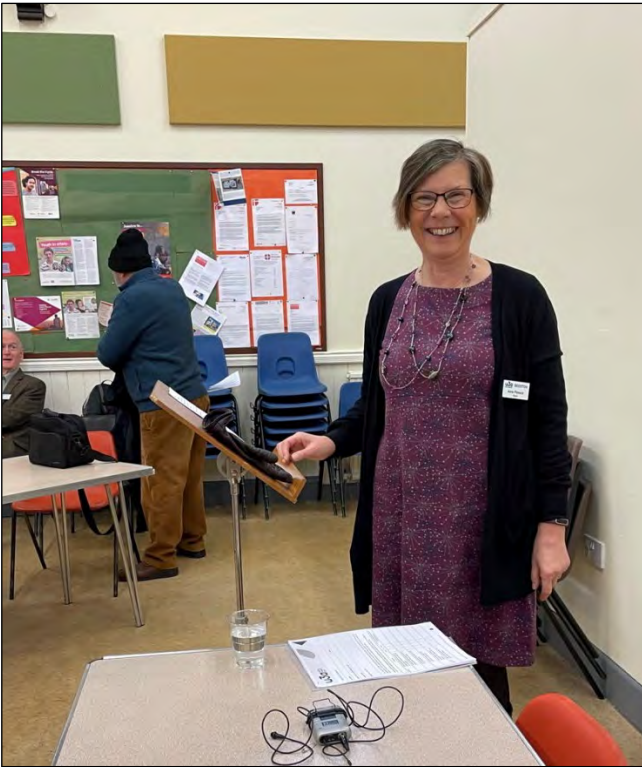
Friday 17th March, we set off home, but before we left we were handed a history of the Hotel, (clever). It was full of stories of suicide, hangings and spirits and ghosts on every level.

No matter, the stay was great and we were a happy bunch. We set off home, the skies were blue and the sun was shining.

Beryl Kemp

BEESTON u3a

Beeston u3a held a Group Facilitator lunch in January. There was a great attendance, with more than 65 people taking part.



We had a nice lunch, a chat about any problems and shared best practices.





Our well-established Yoga group taking a break after another great session.

Karen Attwood

Beeston u3a Publicity Officer

ASHFIELD u3a

At our March meeting we did not run to form and have a speaker, instead there was the chance to see some of the table displays our Interest Groups had arranged. This gave everyone the opportunity to speak to group members and find out more about the groups. Plus we were treated to a fabulous Fashion Show which was put on by the members of the Dressmaking Group who showcased their work. A running commentary was given by the Group Leader, Lynne Jackson. Members modelled a range of beautifully tailored trousers, jackets, lovely dressing gown, evening gowns,

day dresses and tops. I think everyone was very impressed with the skills group members had learnt and the total professional finish of all the outfits.

Short presentation was given re a new Current Affairs group which aims to have a new fresh look at UK newspapers and their approach to headline news, discuss difference in news presentation, interpretation and bias covering tabloids and broadsheets. The first meeting of the New Opera Group unfortunately had to be postponed due to the Leader being marooned abroad due to a strike. I am sure both these groups will be very successful.

There was also the opportunity to sign up for a forthcoming Pie and Pea supper with Guest Entertainer Dave Moylan who promises to 'blow away the winter blues with music, magic and laughter'. A chance to buy tickets for an evening with gardening expert Martin Fish, plus advance notice of a Ravenshead Swing Band performance and details of a Mystery Evening arranged for later in the year. Arrangements for members to visit both Kent and Bruges are all progressing well and our Miscellany Group plan visits to Newark Civil War Museum, Bletchley Park, Trentham Gardens, Floral Media and Ruddington Framework Knitters.

The whole meeting was very positive and full of chat and good humour. All in all we really are learning, laughing and living here in Ashfield u3a.

Val Scott

Val Scott

Committee member

RUDDINGTON u3a

Ruddington is a small, relatively young u3a, formed in 2018. It serves the village of Ruddington, a long-established community which already had several local societies, eg choirs, gardening, keep fit and local history societies. Potential interest groups and sources of active new members are therefore limited.

The Covid years were problematic, but we have gradually recovered. In February 2023 we exceeded our previous highest membership and we now have 169 members and 19 interest groups.

We have however been successful in obtaining support from Reach Rushcliffe and the Cooperative's Community fund.

In the last year we have had a significant turnover of committee members – four leaving for a variety of health and family reasons but three new committee members have recently joined– in the words of our Chairman – like buses, you wait for ages then three come along at once.

Our relatively low numbers mean that some committee members double up in roles.



New Committee (from left to right)

Front row: Di Brown (Membership Secretary); Eileen Marlowe (new); Chris Davison (Minutes secretary and Joint speaker finder); Liz Mc Adam (Vice Chair); Peter Wakelin (Chairman)
Back row: Howard Brown (Joint speaker finder); Liz Thornton (new and interest group coordinator); Barbara Breakwell (Publicity); Tim Williams (new); Mike Wynn (Treasurer); Peter Davison (Business Secretary and Newsletter editor).

We are very appreciative of the Nottinghamshire network's emails and particularly the speaker finder group talk. This helped tremendously when our previous speaker finder unexpectedly retired. Attendance at our monthly meetings averages 40% of the membership.

Last year John Bryan a well-being adviser for Age UK spoke on Scams Prevention. He spoke with enthusiasm giving much interesting and useful information. There were plenty of leaflets to take away but it was the free pens which all disappeared!

Recently Craig Langton of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service spoke about Fire Prevention in the home. He gave an informative, well presented talk with plenty of audience involvement provided. Both speakers are recommended.

The Co-op's community fund will, over a 12-month period, be paying for talks and events aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of our members.

Peter Davison
Business secretary

RAVENSHEAD u3a

Ravenshead Ru3a Trips

Whether the sun is shining
Or it's a windy or rainy day
The Ru3a trippers get ready
And very soon we are on our way.

The yellow community buses
Have their own special names
Waiting at The Sherwood Ranger
Elizabeth, Mary and Ada Lovelace, our minibus
dames.

Our trip organiser plans where to go
Exciting trips announced in 2023
In February we went to Doncaster
In same building: art gallery, museum, cafe and library.

Steeped in Roman history and archaeology
Doncaster is an interesting town
The Dutch artist Albert Houthuesen
Amused us with different paintings of a clown.

The steam locomotives in the basement
We didn't have to go to York
A graffiti wall upstairs to scribble on
So many exhibits to admire, have a laugh and talk.

Two trips in March, first one to Leicester
King Richard the Third, a tragic end we heard
A special talk we had about the discovery and
the dig
The important dates and ceremonies which
occurred.

Next to Newark and to Market Place
Refreshments and an exclusive Tour of the Town
Hall
We listened to the Friends of the Museum,
Admired the ballroom ceiling, symmetry and
each wall.

Some free time in Newark and chatting to our
members
Finding a suitable place for something to eat
Relaxing, exchanging stories and having fun
A resident artist, David Moore, some were lucky to
meet.



Local artist David Moore flanked by Ru3a members Jayne Llewelyn and Halinka Rajchel outside his studio in Newark

In April, to Melton Mowbray we will go
To an old church, St Mary's and an organ recital to hear
Then free time in the town, shopping and relaxing
In historical Anne of Cleves pub for food and a beer.

In May, a Southwell Workhouse trip was quickly filled
One of our Ru3a members will be our guide, that's grand
if there's time, a wander to the Minster, whilst on route
Planning our June trip to Cleethorpes and the sea and sand.



King Richard III Centre, Leicester

Halinka Rajchel
Committee member and Trips Co-ordinator

NEWARK AND DISTRICT u3a

FUNTOGRAPHY GROUP

The “Funtography” group meets each month to enjoy a slide-show of pictures taken on its photo-shoots. A different topic is chosen each month and so far it’s covered everything from abstract to angles, circles to clouds, taking in leading lines and vanishing points along the way. A recent get-together involved a twilight walk around Newark, practising light trails and night-time photography.

There’s always a break for refreshments, (some wag recently came up with the idea that the “F-stop” stands for food stop!), after which the group is split into working groups with their cameras, for some useful technical tips & advice on how to use the various functions & buttons.



February gave us an overview of the meaning of “Bokeh” photography & by the end of the session we came away with the knowledge of what we were able to achieve by correct use of the aperture function, rather than just simply sticking to “Auto” to take pictures.

No special equipment is needed to join in the fun, just an interest in learning how to take good images with our cameras or mobile phones.



Members of the “Funtography” group were given tips & advice on how to get the most out of their cameras.

Maggie George
Chairman

Many thanks to all the Nottinghamshire members who have submitted articles about their u3as. This is your newsletter and it wouldn't exist without your many contributions. Please keep within the 300-word count and do remember the photographs. A photograph always tells a good story!

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE NETWORK OF u3as

** KEEPING IT LEGAL WORKSHOP **

Wednesday 24th May 10.00 to 12.30 Zoom

We are delighted to announce that we are to run this workshop specially for our Notts Network members. This will mean that, in the future, we would be able to follow up any matters arising after the event amongst ourselves. We are also pleased that one of the trainers will be Maria from Ravenshead u3a.

Who is it for? Committee Members, prospective Committee Members and those with a general interest in the running of a u3a.

What does it cover? Information about the key areas all u3as need to be aware of and understand – insurance, data protection, equality and inclusion and safeguarding. It looks at practical steps to ensure compliance and where further information and support is available.

To book on to the workshop please use this link:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/keeping-it-legal-nottinghamshire-network-only-tickets-597806333837>

If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact Rosie Allen:
rosieallen21@outlook.com

Notts u3a Network Website domain name change

The domain name of the Notts u3a Network Website has had to be changed from <https://www.nottsu3anetwork.org> to <https://nottsnetworkofu3as.weebly.com/>

Although the old domain name currently redirects to the new domain name any bookmarks should be updated.

Sorry for the inconvenience
Peter Edge
Webmaster

TRIPS, EVENTS, HOLIDAYS

If your u3a is organising an event, trip or holiday which you would like to share with Nottinghamshire u3a members or maybe you have a few places to fill or a few tickets to sell, then this is the space to promote them.

Please let me have full details including contact details: maria.newsbytes@gmail.com

The first of these invitations received from Dukeries u3a appears below.

**DUKERIES U3A INVITE YOU TO CELEBRATE THE
CORONATION AT A PARTY ON BANK HOLIDAY
MONDAY 8 MAY 2023**

JUBILEE HALL, WELLOW ROAD, OLLERTON, NG22 9AP

4.15pm Doors open 4.45pm The fun begins
5.30pm Hot Meal

Catering by Culinary Delights

Classic British Food Bangers & Mash, Peas, Gravy,
Cornflake Tart or Apple Crumble with Custard
Tea and coffee

(Vegetarian and Gluten Free options available)

Bring your own drinks and glasses

6.30pm Entertainment and Dancing

We are delighted to announce that the fantastic

EASY THOMAS BLUES BAND

will be playing live music to get your feet tapping!!

(Check them out on YouTube)

**DRESS TO IMPRESS FOR THIS
RIGHT ROYAL KNEES UP**

TICKETS u3a MEMBERS £15 GUESTS £16

Contact Leslye Henstock on du3achair2020@gmail.com

Text 07946 702296

Everyone is most welcome! A party not to miss!

Book early!

NEWS FROM THE THIRD AGE TRUST

FIT FOR THE FUTURE

We hope you have managed to listen to recording of Liz Thackray's presentation to the AGM last October. It is still available on YouTube and you can access it by pasting this link into the address bar of your browser:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEVARO9FRoc&t=13s

Let's look at the background to Liz's ideas. Currently each Region elects one Regional Trustee. Once elected the Regional Trustee becomes a trustee of the Third Age Trust and their first priority becomes the Trust. Becoming a member of the Trust Board involves first, getting up to speed with the business of running a large charity and then actually running the charity (e.g. development, strategy, training, policy making, finance, etc., etc.) and all this takes up a lot of time leaving little time for regional matters and issues relating to the regional u3as. So, the work of a Regional Trustee is extremely onerous and time consuming. Board business and regional u3a business add up to virtually a full-time job. And not surprisingly there are not many members who are willing to take up his role.

Liz Thackray, chairman of the Third Age Trust is looking for solutions to this situation. Her ideas involve a Council (or Assembly) of elected regional representatives who would truly represent the regions and the regional u3as. This sort of arrangement would make our representatives' task more manageable and they could better achieve members' needs.

Liz suggests that alongside this Council we would elect representatives to sit on the Board of the Trust – members who have the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to ensure that the Trust acts legally in accordance with charity and general law and also within the parameters set by the Trust governing document (Articles of Association).

So, we would have two bodies – a Council (or Assembly) and a Board of Trustees. Of course, it would be necessary to establish a channel of communication and liaison between this new Council and the Board. The Board would fix the budget but would not tell the Council how it is to be spent or what to do. The two bodies would be inter-dependent. The Board would not exercise control. The Council would make decisions in all matters except budget, structure or all the legal things that a charity has to do.

Right now the Trust is experimenting with a pilot. A steering group has been set up to trial two pilot council meetings of elected representatives of the Regions and Nations plus chairs of the six Trust committees and the Chair of the Network Link. In time Liz hopes that the Council will become a bigger body and would like to see more than one representative from each region.

So, you are encouraged to read all the information about these ideas – on line, on the Trust website, in the Third Age Matters magazine known as TAM, and in our local newsletters. Liz invites members to send to her their ideas and comments using this dedicated email address: governance@u3a.org.uk

Maria Gabrielczyk
Newsbites Editor and Trust Volunteer

SO – WHAT HAS THE THIRD AGE TRUST EVER DONE FOR US?

Well, they have 70+ designated Subject Advisers on all sorts of topics for Study Groups – everything from Amateur Radio to Yoga. There are over 70 Interest Groups Online that you can join from anywhere in the country. They also provide excellent events too, open to all u3a and their members.

Yeh, ok, but....

They send round a national e-newsletter on matters of interest and the doings of u3a and their members – sign up at: <https://www.u3a.org.uk/> And they publish Third Age Matters magazine (TAM) which is delivered to your door for 0.67p an issue for a 90+ page really great magazine. And now they've started podcasts, produced by u3a members with experience in broadcasting!

Oh, and they give excellent advice on everything from finance (special workshops on that one!) to finding more Interest Group leaders and committee members – not only general advice, but answering specific problems when local u3a ask them.

Yes, but....

And they created a model constitution for local u3a which keeps us all legal and operating to best charity commission practice

They also do branding and marketing materials to help us present a lively and professional 'look', and attract new members

But do they help us with insurance?

Yes, they have national insurance policies which cover both the local u3a and also all the individual members when involved in any u3a activity. And all trustees have full Indemnity Insurance – including from the time they're a Steering Group forming a new u3a (oh yes, they also give a start-up grant)

Also, for those local u3a that want to use it, they have a 'Beacon' system for managing membership, keeping records, and managing Study Group membership and activities.

Is that all? Hmmmmm

Oh, I forgot to mention that they help new u3as get set up and going, and they support regional/national networks of u3a so they can support and learn from each other.

Any good in a crisis?

They gave great advice during Covid, both about being safe and what could be kept going, as well as providing high quality events on line available to all u3a and their members during the pandemic.

Do they speak up for us 'oldies', tho'?

Yes, they do, working with other charities and groups to make the case for aging well and gracefully!

Anything new on the horizon?

Two great new initiatives. One is branded merchandise – anything from pens to sweatshirts, branded with your u3a name or the name of your particular Study Group. AND a new Discounting Scheme which will easily save you double or more the cost of your u3a Annual Sub if you sign up and use it.

Oh ok, I give in! Maybe it is a good idea to have a Third Age Trust to support all the local u3a, and maybe it is good value for money for the amount we pay....

Jean Hogg
Former Regional Trustee for the East Midlands

A Statement from Liz Thackray, Chair of the Third Age Trust

Board Review of Changes since October 2022 AGM

In response to criticism following the 2022 AGM, the Board committed to a programme of actions that would improve transparency, consultation and member engagement. At the Board meeting on 29 March, we reviewed that programme to see what was working and what actions still needed to be completed.

Having spoken to many u3as and local Trustees after the AGM, it became obvious that whilst some u3as and some individual members sought more information about finances or other activities, there were many parts of the movement where additional detail or repeated information was unwelcome. Therefore, our focus has been on ensuring that as information and more detail was made available, it would be more easily accessible for those who want it, both via the website, and through talks and special mailings.

Main Principles

A number of crucial principles were initially agreed that all Board members would commit to, which would guide our future actions in decision making and in our ongoing work and communication with the u3a membership:

1. Be clear and responsive as a Board
2. Demonstrate that we are both listening and responding to members
3. Demonstrate that we have learned lessons and recognised and addressed our mistakes
4. We also recognised that in order for members to understand why and how the Board makes decisions, we need to improve the accessibility and visibility of information, and improve the channels used to communicate with u3as and u3a members. Proposals need to be justified with appropriate evidence.

Accessibility of Information

A dedicated section on the website, [Trust and Trustee Updates](#), now contains regular updates on a range of activities, with regular links going out to u3as, regions and networks. The section can be accessed on [the u3a website](#). Members are required to sign into the website in order to access this section.

- Summaries of all recent Board meetings
- Half-year finance report, Reserves and Investment Policies. (In addition to circulating Finance News Extras to u3a Treasurers.)
- Trust Annual Report and draft AGM Minutes
- Staff roles and hours graphic
- £4 subscription breakdown
- Summary of the CEO's report to the Board

Improving Communication Channels

The structure of the u3a movement creates challenges for communicating consistently and regularly with the u3a membership. We hope that during the pilot phase, the introduction of a u3a Council will provide greater opportunities to improve representation and engagement, and to justify and enable u3as to propose and prepare for any future changes.

The following additions to our communications have been introduced:

- Ask The Staff sessions are being held monthly on Zoom, and Ask The Chair, and Ask The CEO sessions will continue throughout the year.
- Each main Newsletter now includes an article featuring a member of staff, explaining their role.
- Special single-topic Mailings are being issued – Finance News Extra, Fit For The Future and u3a Council mailings are examples.
- Latest Update Mailings are now issued twice monthly updating on various activities.

There is more information on [the Trust and Trustee Updates page](#) of the website.

If you want more information, or you cannot access information on the website,

please speak to the Trustee for your region or nation – see all the Trustees on [the Board of Directors page](#).

Liz Thackray
Chair of the Third Age Trust

FREE ONLINE LEARNING EVENTS

Have you checked out the website of The Third Age Trust? Just go to: www.u3a.org.uk You will need to register to be able to access all the information but it's a very easy process.

Did you know that there are lots of interesting and exciting online [Learning Events](#) details of which you will find on the u3a site under Events?

u3a members can join a wide range of online talks, workshops and courses for free with their membership!

Most of these events are presented by members, sharing their knowledge or skills with others across the movement. There is also a wide range of talks on offer from well-known speakers and organisations, plus in-person events at venues like the Royal Institution.

Here are some of the exciting events coming up in the next few weeks – ALL FREE TO JOIN:



Exploring World Faiths: Fleeing for Faith

In April we commemorate the Jewish Passover, when Israelites fled their enslavement in Egypt. We explore this and other similar occasions.

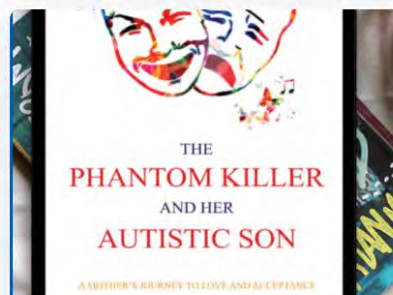
Mon 17 Apr at 10am
Free – online via zoom



u3a Science Network Event with Three Speakers

Featuring talks on anti-oxidants and superfoods, how Earthquakes happen and the London sewer system.

Tues 18 Apr at 10.30am
Free – online via zoom



Let's Talk About Autism

An introduction to autism facts, and my experience with my 44 year old autistic son by Grace Venters of New Milton u3a

Tues 18 Apr at 2pm

Free – online via zoom



Family History: Using Census Data

Insights, tips and examples for family historians. A look at the history and content of census data, and its use in family history research.

Wed 19 April at 2pm

Free - Online via zoom

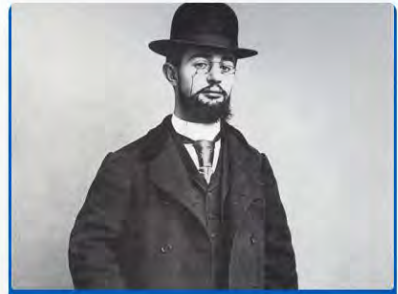


Mindfulness and Meditation Continuation Sessions

Join us each month as Mike, John and Ruth of Sheffield u3a Mindful Ageing Group continue the practices introduced in the Mindfulness and Meditation Series, and introduce new ones.

Third Thurs of every month at 10am, beginning 16 Feb

Free - online via Zoom

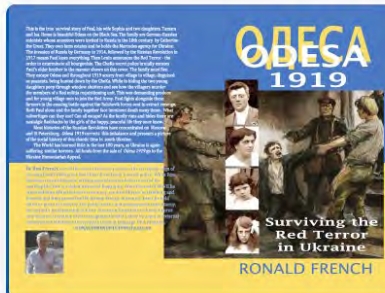


Toulouse Lautrec and the Cabarets of Paris

The world of eighteen-nineties Montmartre in Paris - a talk by Peter Webb.

Thurs 20 April at 2pm

Free - online via zoom



War in Ukraine, 1919

Ron French of Beccles u3a explores the terror of the Russian Revolution in Ukraine through a personal story.

Mon 24 April at 10am

Free - Online via zoom

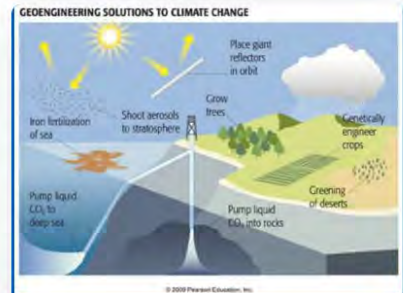


Discussing Climate Change: Involving All Generations

How can the generations support each other in raising awareness and campaigning, and discussing crucial issues such as climate change?

Wed 26 April at 10am

Free - Online via zoom



Climate Change and Geo-Engineering

Ian Hawker of East Suffolk u3a asks what radical solutions are available to avoid climate disaster as the Earth warms?

Tues 2 May at 10am

Free - online via zoom

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF NEWSBITES

Please send your articles (please keep to a maximum 300-word count) and remember those all-important photos by 7th June 2023 to maria.newsbytes@gmail.com