

The key role of u3a is a mutual self-help organisation to provide life-long learning, recreational and social activities. And also have some fun. u3a Leeds has done all of this very successfully. Our membership has grown consistently and has now reached over **670** members. We have over **45** groups and new ones are coming along shortly. This is all down to teamwork from the committee and group leaders. This year we have worked well as a team and we are now enjoying the benefits of a vibrant and renewed u3a. Thank you to all who have worked hard to achieve this success.

The most dramatic change in our u3a is the new approach to publicity. I should particularly like to acknowledge the considerable effort from our publicity team of Gary Thurston, Sue Oliver and John Heap. Together they have developed a new refreshed website based on standard software which should last us for quite a few years. They have also started a Leeds u3a Facebook Community and produced an excellent Leeds u3a Yearbook (2022). Well done team! Thanks also to Chris Lance who faithfully developed and maintained the original website over 12 years and played a major role in the smooth transition to the new website.

Another change has been our Tuesday afternoon meetings. We have had some really great speakers over the last twelve months with a wide range of topics including

- **The curious incident of Agatha Christie**
- **A history of Cook's Tours beginning with their first tour in Victorian England**
- **A reality TV experience from Malcolm Johnson learning to drive at the age of 65**
- **Assistance dogs and a guest appearance from golden Labrador *Pammy***
- **Life at The Top, the highest and remotest pub in England**
- **The trials and tribulations of a theatre producer**
- **Experiences of a village headmaster**
- **An account of a misspent youth at the American Air Base in East Anglia**
- **Records banned by the BBC**
- **The first nature reserve**
- **My life in Crime by former barrister and author Simon Michael**
- **An account of Amy Johnson, Hull's pioneering aviator**
- **A musical experience of The Great American Songbook**

Thank you to Janet Powell for organising these talks. Also a special thank you to Jackie Passman who stepped in without notice when a speaker didn't turn up. Jackie gave us an excellent impromptu talk on her father's experience of Japanese labour camps. The attendance at these meetings has grown considerably and on occasions has got close to the maximum of 110 that we are allowed in the MASSC hall.

Which brings me to the next point. The committee has looked at various locations which we might use if we continue to grow and exceed the numbers allowed at MASSC. However, we have not found anywhere which comes close to meeting our requirements. Any new location used for our meetings would need

- **Accommodation for up to 200 people**
- **On a major bus route from the centre of Leeds**
- **Car parking free of charge for at least 100 vehicles**
- **Kitchen facilities to make tea/coffee**
- **Onsite support to set out chairs and tables when needed**
- **Hire costs within our budget**

Moor Allerton Sports and Social Club meets all of these criteria except the maximum capacity which is only 110. It makes us appreciate how fortunate we are to have access to the MASSC facility. So we are likely to continue meeting there for the foreseeable future.

Our groups continue to grow and we are seeing new groups emerge. This is the very core of our u3a and I would like to thank all the group leaders who work so hard to make our u3a activities successful. This can only happen when people come forward to offer new ideas and leadership of new groups. We also need to be willing to start up second groups when the membership gets larger so that we avoid waiting lists to join groups. Waiting lists are an anathema to u3a and a deterrent to new members joining our u3a. I would particularly like to commend the leadership of the Book Group which over just a few years has grown to become four different book groups. Similarly we now have four different walking groups to cater for a range of walking tastes and abilities. This is the real spirit of u3a. Thank you also to our Group Coordinator Jo Turner for her work in getting the new groups organised.

I have really enjoyed serving as your chair over the last year. After 6 years of u3a committees in Bridgnorth and Leeds where I have served as Treasurer, Vice Chair, Group Coordinator and recently as Chair, it is now time for a rest. My plea, especially to our new members and younger members is to ask you to consider what you might be able to contribute towards the effective running of our u3a Leeds organisation.

I started by saying that u3a is teamwork. Thank you to all group leaders and committee members. We shall be losing four long serving committee members - Sue Buchan (Secretary), Maureen Lewin (Treasurer), Steve McGrail (Membership Secretary) and Linda Filewood (Assistant Membership Secretary). Thank you for your continuous support and hard work. I will also have stood down as Chair by the time that this report is published.

We have recently gained five new members - Linda Greenland, Suzanne Higginbotham, John Thurston, Liz Frood and Angie Bourdillon. But we would still like more of you to join our committee and take on board some of the responsibilities for running our u3a. It can be quite challenging at times but it is also very enjoyable and rewarding.

With kind regards  
David