

Leicester Newsletter

March 2025

AGM



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If this link does not open, just copy, and paste it into your browser.

CONTENTS

Page

Membership Information	2
Programme – February Report	3
March meeting AGM	3
April Meeting	3
All members Coffee Morning	3
Wellbeing & Hospitality	3
News from the Groups Coordinator – Sue Took	4
Reports from Groups and from Individuals	4
Puzzle Corner	14
About the newsletter	15
Message from the Chair – Neil Taylor	16
Puzzle Solution	17
From the Editor	18
Cartoon Corner	19

For news from the Third Age Trust, you can sign up for your own Trust newsletter at:

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/news/newsletter#signup>

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION *from Angie Barnes, Membership Secretary.* membership@leicesteru3a.org.uk

Membership Stands at 349. We have had 27 new members since November to date which compared to 16 last year which I am pleased with. We have had 27 resign for this year due to health problems or moving away from the area. We have had less people lapse this year of which I am still expecting to hear from some of them. So, I am pleased to say membership is looking good and increasing slowly.

PROGRAMME

February Report -

By Glyn Bray

On a chilly February afternoon u3a members were treated to a talk from Carol Marsden on her adventures whilst volunteering. After 34 years working in the NHS she decided to devote her time and energy to raising money for charity and some of her exploits included racing across Lapland with a team of huskies, trekking across the Sahara Desert with camels and appearing on TV programmes such as Bargain Hunt and The Chase. Complete with slides she talked about living on reindeer soup and coping with sub-zero temperatures in Lapland and 30 degrees in the desert! Carol takes on any challenge and is now preparing to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in June in aid of 'Prostaïd' which supports men who have prostate cancer. An enjoyable and interesting talk which thoroughly deserved the applause she received at the end.

March 11th 2025 AGM – You should by now have received the final papers for the AGM. If you haven't, please contact the secretary urgently. secretary@leicesteru3a.org.uk

April 8th 2025 - Brian Johnson - Arthur Wakerley Architect, Politician, and Visionary Born 1862 in Melton Mowbray became one of Leicester's finest Architects.

All MEMBERS COFFEE MORNINGS: *Sandra Barker – Hospitality and Wellbeing* Coffee mornings continue to be well attended and enjoyable. They are held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 10.00 am onwards at the Quaker Meeting House, Queen's Road. Why not join us for refreshments, friendship, and chat?

Wellbeing and Hospitality - Enabling everyone to take part. Is there anything that prevents you from fully participating? Christchurch is fully accessible with disabled facilities. Members of the Wellbeing & Hospitality team are there if you need to have an end of row/front seat. If there is anything else we can do that enables you to take part, please tell us. If you would prefer to

talk to someone before you attend, then please give Sandra Barker a call and, if you have any suggestions, we'd be very happy to hear them. wellbeing@leicesteru3a.org.uk

Also, if you know of any member who is unwell or has suffered a loss, then please tell Angie Barnes and she will send a card. Send your notices to - cards@leicesteru3a.org.uk .

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS COORDINATOR - Sue Took

We have 4 new groups wanting to start, Recorder, keep fit, modern film club (see below) and a 2nd French conversation group. If you're interested in these see me and put your name down. I will be organising a meet up meeting and will let you know detail.

I am hoping to take over the complete role at the AGM so please come and support us.

We are planning a **modern cinema group** to be held 1st Monday of the month showing films from 1980s to date, so we don't overlap with classic film club. Each member will be invited (but is not obliged) to choose a film in turn, and we can (if that is what the group decides) discuss the film afterwards. We will, of course, have a refreshment and comfort break. See Sue if interested. *Karen Closs*

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

NB. You can go to our website (link on the front page) and under 'CALENDAR' you will find all the groups and their meeting dates and times for the following weeks.

Digital Photography The February meeting saw a collection of photos being shown and discussed on the topic of 'shadows'. The low sun of winter produced some very long shadows - when it shone! Otherwise, daylight through a window, or strategically placed lamps, did the job, as well as saved images from sunnier times. The next meeting will be at Christchurch on Thursday 13th March, 2pm to 4pm, when the topic will be 'bridges'. A photo shoot at Belgrave Hall Gardens is planned for April. New members are always welcome. If you like taking photos, with a camera, smartphone, or tablet, do get in touch and come and have a session with us.

Richard Taylor - Convenor



'Plant Abstract'

'Passing Clouds'

And here are two from Cliff Ault.



Art Appreciation

Mary Neilson - Convenor

Please note a change of start time from 11:00 to 12:00 on the first Thursday of each month.

What u3a means to me

Margaret Bowerman - Member

I joined Tendring u3a a few months after my retirement at the age of 60. It had formed a branch at Clacton-on-Sea where we lived. My husband, Neville, joined a history group which was led by a neighbour and suggested that I would find the u3a enjoyable. Not the history group for me, though. It had been my least favourite subject at school!

I joined a play-reading group and became the leader of it when the elderly leader needed to stand down.

The chairman came to visit me at home to persuade me to form another group – whatever I wanted! I formed a craft group which was held in my home because I had a large room which meant eight to ten members could fit in along with their equipment. So, once a month, Neville, my husband, and I moved furniture and equipment to turn our lounge into a workroom before 10 a.m.

That group was still working until a few months ago when I was told it had closed. It had lasted 30 years.

I belonged to Clacton u3a until we moved back to Leicester in 2010. Over the years I spent much time on the Committee and was Chairperson (!) a few times. I also ran and/or housed other groups. Clacton u3a is still large and running. I was invited a few years ago to a special anniversary celebration. It was so enjoyable to meet old friends again. Fairly recently some members left to form a new group in Frinton on Sea.

Our return to Leicester to be near our daughter in 2010 would have been a lonely time for me if I had not been aware that I would find a u3a group.

The u3a here, in Leicester, has been a delight! I appreciate the time and hard work the Committee, group leaders, coffee makers, cake makers and helpers do for us all. Thank you!

By the way...I enjoy History now...I must have had a poor teacher at school. I did!

Discovering Architecture

Over the winter months, Discovering Architecture has been 'hibernating' in the warm confines of Christchurch.

An architectural quiz in November proved how many of us were ignorant of some of the more obscure architectural terminology... obviously more homework required!

In December, the group was invited to visit St Michaels Methodist church on Fosse Road North, to inspect the work of local conservation stonemasons, Skill Stone Ltd., on the external structure of the building. This also included a tour of the very diverse range of Christmas trees, including two by our member, Graham Lees.

The New Year kicked off with the group discussing, with the aid of photographs, their favourite examples of Art Deco Architecture, which produced some exciting examples from both the local and much wider environs.

February featured a talk by our favourite local speaker, Prof Peter Swallow, on 3 local architects; Joseph Pickford, Isaac Barradale and Watson Fothergill. In March, another group member, Guy Barefoot, will give us a talk on his family connections to a group of East Anglian architects.

When the weather warms up (?) we will venture outside and explore the City and County architecture.



Christmas tree



Stone restoration

Discussion Group 2

Henry Paulinski – Convenor

With an average attendance of 18 members, the ever-popular Discussion Group is not averse to tackling controversial and sensitive topics. Our last session in February discussed "Is there Life after Death?" with Roz Devine and Peter Kilty locking horns in a lively debate. Not surprisingly, the vote was won by the "undecided". Three less serious topics are also briefly discussed in our monthly sessions. Continuing in the same vein as the main topic, our debaters also mulled over the differences between religion and spirituality, as well as "Should we ban school uniform?" and "Should ear piercing on babies be banned?"

Forthcoming subjects for discussion will include Assisted Dying, the legalisation of Prostitution and the dangers and benefits of Artificial Intelligence; but despite the gravity of some of the agenda, our Group still manages to produce humorous interludes with comments like "Statistically, six out of seven dwarves are NOT Happy".

Bus Pass Tours

The bus pass group had a meeting at The Phoenix Cafe to discuss where we would like to go for the next 6 months. Plenty of ideas were given. The group will be visiting Lutterworth on Thursday 20th March. If anyone not in this group and wishing to join just let Sue Took know on buspass@leicesteru3a.org.uk and your name and contact details will be added to the group.

Poetry for Pleasure

Jane Michel - Convenor

Our group has gone down to five, so we are looking for three new members to share the pleasure of finding poems to illustrate different topics each month. Sometimes we all contribute something, sometimes it's one person who chooses a poet and/or poems. Always there is some chat, and of course discussion of the poems, as well as coffee, tea and homemade goodies. We meet on the second Monday of the month, at 10.30am. It would be good to welcome new members with their fresh insight. Contact Jane at poetry2@leicesteru3a.org.uk

Science and Technology

Anthony Matthew - convenor

Many u3a groups get their members performing in their chosen activity. In the Bridge group they play the game, walking groups get out in the country and How Hard Can It Be brings out a daredevil spirit in those who should really be too old for such challenges. Other groups learn about activities rather than actually perform. Architecture and Design meetings do not design any buildings and Medieval People members do not engage in time travel. Science and Technology is of this latter type, so meetings do not use any test tubes, microscopes or Geiger counters. We do not have access to any laboratory but even if we did there would be a requirement for members to be well enough qualified to know what they were doing. (Otherwise, it would be a test of how far u3a's insurance policy would cover us.) So the only requirement for joining the group is interest rather than knowledge. Still, members can hope to gain some knowledge from the group, perhaps by listening to other members who are well informed on a particular subject. Another way is by offering to talk about a topic where they aim to gather enough knowledge to at least provide a starting point for discussion in the group. Teaching others about a subject is a very effective way of learning it oneself. Another way of introducing an issue is by a video and there are a great number of science videos available on the web.

Sometimes, though we go out to places of interest. There was an article about our visit to the Lapworth Museum of Geology in Birmingham in a previous newsletter and we intend to repeat the visit that we made to Bletchley Park a number of years ago. Meetings are at the Quaker Meeting House in the morning of the last Thursday of the month. Send an email to science@leicesteru3a.org.uk if you are interested in joining us.

Irish group

Carmel Davison convenor

Why learn Irish? It's not easy. The spelling and pronunciation are alien to the English speaker. A few Irish words you may know already: curragh, leprechaun, shebeen, Sassenach, poteen,

shamrock, brogue, whiskey sláinte and perhaps less well known: galore, slew, smashing.

Irish was the predominant language in Ireland but from the 16th century it went into decline owing to British rule, famine and emigration. If you are in Ireland you will notice many signs and expressions used e.g. Offig an phoist (post office), an Taoiseach (prime minister), an Garda síochána (police), an lár (city centre on the buses) Also signs on small shops and bars are painted in Gaelic lettering.

The influence of the language can be heard in Hiberno English.

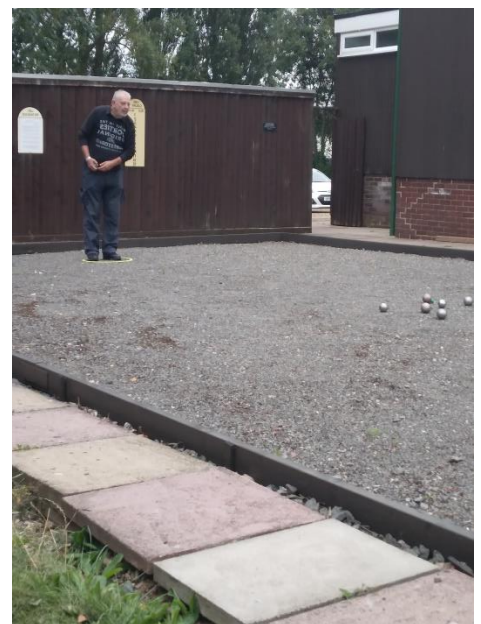
There are expressions such as "I'm after reading the book" or instead of yes or no "so it is". Words like knackered, craic, fair play, eejit, give out (tell off) are used.

There seems to be a resurgence in the language. The BBC has shown a series in Irish set in Donegal Crá (torment) and the film an Cailín clúin (the Quiet girl based on a story by Claire Keegan) is on More4 and An t-Eilean the Island is on BBC4.

For more information contact irish@leicesteru3a.org.uk

Petanque/Boules

New members are welcome to join the Petanque group when it restarts in April. It is good fun with friendly rivalry. If you want to give it a go we have some spare boules. Please contact petanque@leicesteru3a.org if you are interested.



Summer Croquet

Janet Connolly - Convenor

Used to play golf, but now it's a walk too far? Or, played putting whilst on holiday? Come and give croquet a try. We play the golf form of croquet on a tennis court size pitch, taking it in turn to hit our own ball through the hoop, or our partners, but not our opponents! All equipment is provided.

We play at the Leicester Croquet Club, Monks Rest Gardens, Vicarage Lane, Leicester, LE5 1EE on 2nd and 4th Wednesday mornings during the summer months.

If interested contact Janet at croquet@leicesteru3a.org.uk

Bookworms - The First Ten Years

Nick Arlett - Convenor

Leicester u3a's Bookworms, a novel reading group, celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. We had our first meeting on 6th May 2015. There were four of us to begin with and we used to meet in each other's houses. Since then, there have been many changes. The group grew in size, people joined and people left, and we moved to a public venue in the city. There was a hiatus during the pandemic, but the group continued to function on Zoom. Our numbers diminished considerably and when we started to meet again face to face, Leicester having been hit severely by lock-downs, we were reduced again to about four members. Slowly more people joined, some left, the dynamics continually changing, until we now have a membership of fourteen.

The move to a public, city venue was for egalitarian reasons. We tried various venues, and now meet at the Exchange Bar, opposite Curve. We have a room exclusively to ourselves, with a picture window onto the street. It is accessible to all - central and easily reached by public transport from anywhere in the city, so ownership of a car is not a requirement.

Throughout the ten years we have kept to several principles. We always meet on the first Wednesday of every month. Every member gets to choose and introduce a novel, although, since each member proposes three options, the group gets to choose from the novels

proposed. We do not have the same author twice. (The Bookworms page on the Leicester u3a website lists all the novels and authors since the group began.) Every member has their say about each novel before we go into a general discussion.

With a membership of fourteen we cannot at the moment take more members but we do have a waiting list and new reading groups can be formed. The u3a has a policy that no groups are ever full.

This account of our ten year history is merely factual. What is more difficult to convey is the experience of all the stories that have flourished in our heads, all the journeys, the characters, the adventures, the places, and all the different perspectives on life from some of the best writers in the world. Reading takes you out of yourself and the day-to-day stresses of your own and the world's problems but at the same time gives you an insight into these very same things. Perhaps in these strange times, when 'Fair is foul and foul is fair', there is no better place for your head to be than in a book.

French Conversation Advanced *Margot Fawcett and Alison Standen*
- Convenors

We are a group of French speakers who meet fortnightly on Thursdays, 2.30 to 4.30 pm., at the Clarendon Park Club on Queens Road.

The group is informal and welcoming. We discuss a variety of subjects from our experiences of travel to 'if dogs should be vegetarians'!

At Christmas we met up for a meal at Boboli in Kibworth, and enjoyed it so much we ventured out to Evington for New Year to a Turkish restaurant.

We have recently taken over as joint convenors and we give our thanks to Joe Goddard for looking after us so well.

We pay £2 a session each to the venue to cover use of the room and refreshments. If you are interested, please contact us at frenchadvanced2@leicesteru3a.org.uk



NOTE FROM THE EDITOR –

If only my French lessons had been as much fun as they seem to be having! Sadly not, and I was removed from my class. Ah well. C'est la vie!

POSSIBLE NEW GROUP - Dinghy Sailing

Richard Allsop

Richard currently runs this group outside u3a but says "If we had enough takers, we would be able to form a new u3a group"

Is anyone interested in learning, or perhaps re-igniting their interest in, Dinghy Sailing?

A small group of 'Senior Sailors' meet every Tuesday morning, to play around in small boats, on John Merricks Lake, near Wanlip. The group is run by qualified RYA instructors, operating under the LRYSA banner (Leicester and Rutland Youth Sailing Association). (Obviously we are the Senior Youth division!)

The Association has a fully equipped 'club house' with toilets and changing facilities for men and women. A variety of small dinghies are available, and rescue boats and crew are always present on the lake.

If sailing appeals to you, please get in touch with Richard Allsop, for more information: Email via groups@leicesteru3a.org.uk putting 'sailing' in your subject line and we will pass these on to Richard.

PUZZLE CORNER A Sudoku (created by Cliff Ault – Member Cryptic Crossword Group) **Solution on page 17.**

		1	8		9			
							6	
2			6				4	1
		4		2			3	
	7							
			1		7	8		
				6			8	
		7						
4	9	2			8	3	5	

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

Delivery

The newsletter is normally printed for those who prefer a hard copy. It is available on a first come first served basis at the monthly meeting and coffee morning. If you would like a hard copy but cannot make these events the Membership Secretary is happy to send a copy by post to anyone who sends her a supply of stamps and their full address. It will also continue to be delivered to members by email as a pdf file before each monthly meeting.

Note from the Editor - Registered blind? We can provide an A3 version for you. Please let me know so that I can arrange to get one printed for you each month.

Photos

Please remember to get permission from any people in your photos for us to publish them. This permission will be assumed if you send them to the editor.

The deadline for items to be included in the next newsletter which will be in April is mid-day Friday 21st March 2025.

Contributions should be sent to the Editor Margaret Potter at: newsletter@leicesteru3a.org.uk If you want to submit your entry as hard copy, please contact Margaret or the Membership Secretary, Angie Barnes, for the address. membership@leicesteru3a.org.uk

Please note, the deadline for submission for the rest of the year are:

April	Friday 21 st March
May	Friday 25 th April
June	Friday 23 rd May
July	Friday 20 th June
September	Friday 22 nd August
October	Friday 26 th September
November	Friday 24 th October

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR – NEIL TAYLOR

If you look on our new website, you will find the Aims and Objectives I set myself on becoming Chairman. It is a checklist of what I think we should do to continue to make our organisation a lively place to be. It includes: to retain and increase our membership; to widen the already large variety of interest groups, activities, and events that we have; and to increase our contact with both our membership and the wider community. I think you will agree that we – you all as well as the Committee – are well on the way to meeting every single one of them.

But we are not complacent, and we will continue to work day to day to ensure that the entire checklist is brought to fruition.

We want to be warm, friendly and outgoing to new members, the wider community, and nationally. Therefore, if you don't already, do come along to our monthly meetings and coffee Mornings, where you will find fascinating talks, or simply the partaking of coffee, tea, fine cake and excellent conversation on topics global and local.

In essence, our aims and objectives come down to three things, as stated in the Third Age Trust slogan: learning, laughing, living!

SUDOKU SOLUTION

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5	2	6	1	3	7	8	9	4
3	1	5	4	6	2	7	8	9
8	6	7	3	9	5	4	1	2
4	9	2	7	1	8	3	5	6

From The Editor

To all members – Thank you to everyone who has submitted copy for the newsletter throughout last year.

To all of you who have enjoyed reading it, can you perhaps contribute to 2025? It doesn't have to be a long article, but I know that there is much more going on in our u3a than appears in the newsletter.

To all Convenors – However large or small your group please consider submitting an article. OR – If your group makes a change to it's format or meeting date in the following few weeks each month, let me know and I will try and find room to publish it. Thank you all for the bumper bundle this month in response to me pleading email.

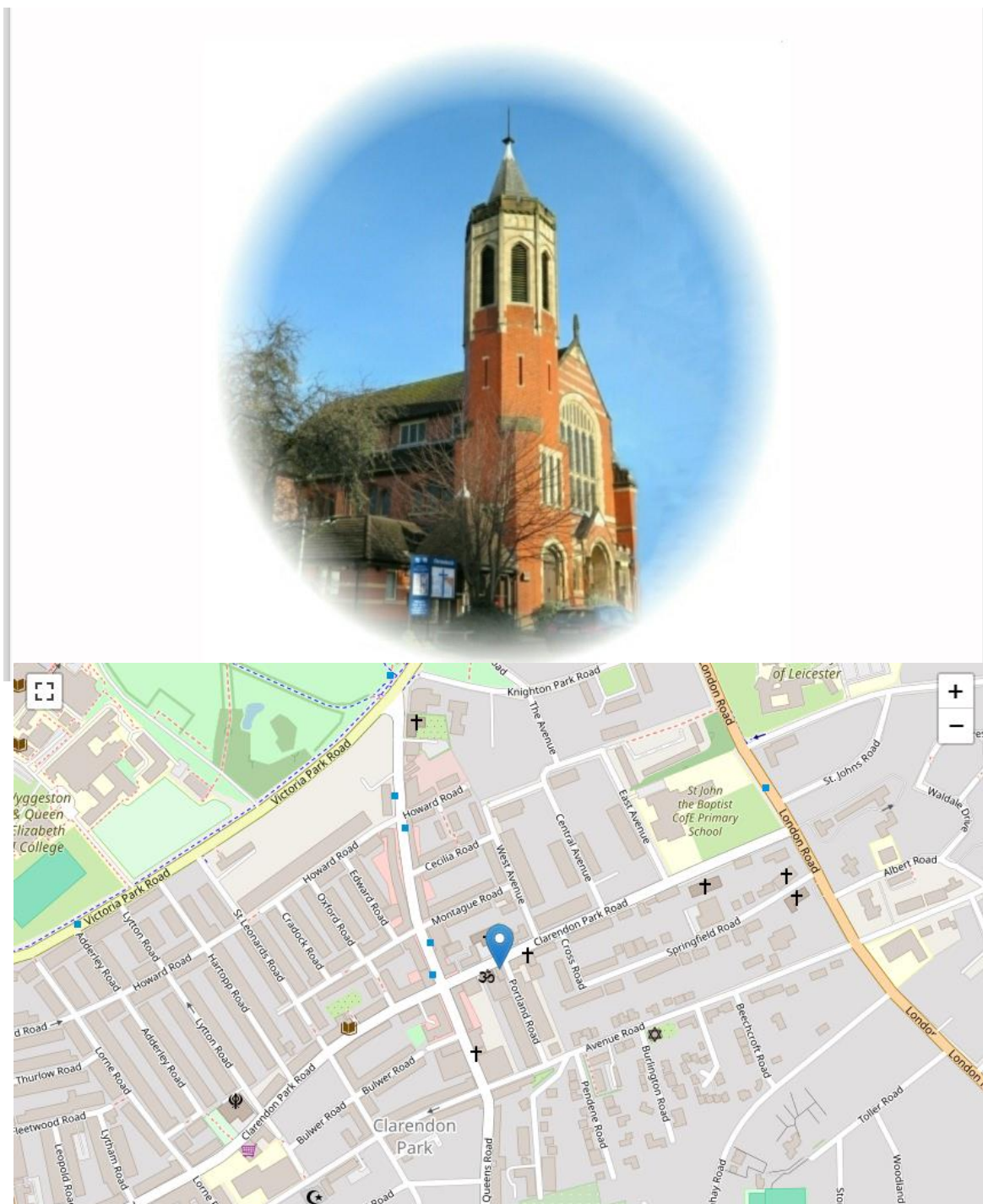
Regards

Margaret Potter – Editor

newsletter@leicesteru3a.org.uk

telephone number in your contact sheet.





Leicester u3a meets at 2:30pm on the second Tuesday of each month (except August and December) at Christchurch, Clarendon Park Road, LE2 3AH, and there are special interest groups that meet regularly in members' homes and elsewhere. For more information, or to join, contact the Membership Secretary at membership@leicesteru3a.org.uk or telephone 0116 2152751

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