



Bridge group: competition winners

# Welcome

Welcome to Burton on Trent u3a

Nestled on the banks of the River Trent, Burton upon Trent is a town steeped in history and famed for its brewing heritage. But beyond the hops and heritage, it's a vibrant community full of character, curiosity, and connection.

As Chair of Burton-on-Trent u3a, I'm proud to say our town offers the perfect setting for lifelong learning and friendship. Whether its charming market streets that draw you, its proximity to the beautiful Staffordshire countryside, or simply the warmth of its people, Burton has something for everyone.

Our u3a is here to help you make the most of it. We welcome anyone no longer in full-time employment who wants to stay active, explore new interests, and enjoy life in good company. With over 40 interest groups and a calendar full of events, there's always something happening—and always someone to share it with.

If you're new to the area or looking for a fresh start, come and join us. You'll find a friendly face, a shared laugh, and a place to belong.

Learn, Laugh, Live with Burton-on-Trent u3a.



Chrys Smedley, Burton on Trent u3a chair

We are a local charity based in Burton upon Trent, Staffordshire, dedicated to providing opportunities for people who are no longer in full-time employment to stay active, connected, and curious. Our mission is simple: to encourage lifelong learning and participation in informal, enjoyable activities across a wide range of interests.

Find out more and get in touch via: [burton-on-trent.u3asite.uk](http://burton-on-trent.u3asite.uk)  
Registered Charity No. 1146122

# News and updates

## Wine appreciation group

We rounded off 2025 with Mark presenting his 'Odd One Out' challenge, which included an assortment of different wines from Europe and both North and South America. As usual, some were enjoyed by all with others sparked differences of opinion among the members. As no prices were given until the end, the 'odd' one we had to spot was which was which we thought would be the most expensive, and was it worth paying the extra!

As usual we didn't have a December meeting as it would fall between Christmas and New Year, so our next meeting was at the end of January, when four of the members each brought in a bottle of a wine they'd enjoyed over the Christmas period and thought the rest of us might like, too. This was a very enjoyable meeting – the wines were all well-received – a pleasant start to the new year.

As usual, huge thanks to the members who source the bottles of wine to introduce to us! We still currently have a waiting list of members wishing to join our group. If you would like to be added to this, or you have any other queries, please get in touch via the link on the Burton u3a website.

Sue Fraser

## Walking Football

The Walking Football group is thriving and continues to be played with enormous good humour. At the moment the group has reached full capacity with 20 players registered. Such is the popularity of the sport that we are receiving regular enquiries from people who are not yet members of the U3A. Perhaps not surprising as a Google search for Walking Football Burton finds us towards the very top of the 1st page.

Unfortunately the sports hall at the Meadows in Burton isn't that big and can only comfortably accommodate 6-a-side games at the most. When we have more than 12 attending, players have to rotate out which isn't ideal and I'm firmly of the opinion that people come to play rather than to watch from the sidelines for any length of time.

Having said that, as with many U3A groups, the numbers can tend to fluctuate due to holidays, injuries, family commitments etc but it may well be that we will need to think about adding an additional session in the not too distant future.

Excitingly, we have arranged to play a couple of games against our friends from Derby U3A with a home leg in early February and an away leg later in March.

Chris Macaré

## Historic churches

In November twenty-six of us visited St George's church, Ticknall. It was a lovely church and we were made very welcome. Even the weather was kind – a bright, sunny day which made the already beautiful stained-glass windows even more attractive.



As usual, we did not have a visit in December, so our next visit was in January, to St Chad's church, in Hunter Street, Burton. There were forty members signed up for this visit and although the church was a little chilly the welcome from Steven the churchwarden was warm! He told us about the history of the church and led us round, pointing out interesting details then, after coffee, he took a small group of us up the tower to tell us about the bells – one of which had been donated by Burton Albion FC. Huge thanks must go to Helen who kindly stepped in to provide the refreshments, and to her helpers on the day.



We are still busy planning our visits for this year, as usual trying to spread them out around Burton and nearby villages, but we'll definitely be going to Newton Solney and hopefully Tatenhill. If there's a church you've enjoyed visiting that you would recommend, do let us know.

If you'd like to be updated with details of which churches we'll be visiting, please get in touch via the link on the Burton u3a website and we can add you in to the mailing list. Visits are on the 3rd Thursday of the month and we generally pay £1.50 as our Burton u3a 'session fee', with a donation to the church for refreshments.

Sue Fraser and Helen Barnett

### Ukulele group

Our Ukulele group meets on the First and Third Thursday of every month so if you fancy joining our friendly group you will be very welcome.

The 3 months prior to Christmas were pretty busy for us, not only with our normal sessions, but with extra rehearsals for an upcoming Christmas concert. Holly Green retirement housing complex had asked us to perform for the residents at Christmas. We were looking forward to the event as we had played there previously in the summer and had enjoyed a lovely afternoon. At the time it had been arranged for us to play on their lawn. Unfortunately it was a very hot and windy day so things did not quite go to plan. Our music sheets were blown about so we tried to peg them down but then the sun umbrella collapsed so we had no alternative but to go inside to play. Holly Green were very hospitable to us and despite the move indoors the concert was enjoyed by one and all.

Within our group we have a performance group made up of, well anybody who enjoys playing in front of an audience. We are a friendly bunch and it must be said that although we strive to play well we don't take ourselves too seriously.

It is not unheard of for one of us to drop our music all over the floor or forget to play the intro to a song and come in too early but we just laugh and keep calm and carry on as the saying goes. The Christmas concert went extremely well and the residents (all in their Christmas jumpers) joined in the singing. We were, very kindly, offered a drink and cake during the interval. At the end we were asked if we would come back this summer to play again for them. We were delighted and promptly said we would.

Angie Richardson



## Bridge group

The Bridge Group goes from strength to strength with 30 members of the "experienced" group and 12 in the beginners section. We have taken some photos of the members enjoying their Bridge at beginner level-----and the cost is simply to buy a drink well evidenced in the photos!

I think it is easy to feel nervous about joining any activity without any prior experience----- but this does not happen in the beginners Bridge where everyone was new to the game, so we offer immediate tuition, and you come into a group where everyone is learning!

What do you need to learn Bridge? I think the ability to cope with every human emotion like frustration, satisfaction and anything in between!! should add above all a sense of fun, as we do not take ourselves too seriously, but try and improve if possible!

We do have places available at advanced level and beginners-----so do contact us and try out a game that infuriates and delights at all levels!

Front cover: Graham, Wendy, Peter and Jackie, winners of the three-month competition.



## Gardening Club

The Gardening Club resumed our meetings at Rolleston Club In September after a busy summer of outside visits which were included in the Summer newsletter.

September was an interesting start to the Autumn with Penny Wheat who entertained us with her talk 'Dig It'. We were all expecting to learn about digging in the garden and were surprised that the title was taken from a common expression used by her students when she was a lecturer. We all found her quiz about gardening very amusing. The clues for one section were songs or pieces of music which she whistled, eg: the bluebells of Scotland and tie a ribbon around the old oak tree, all in tune

Jo Richart from Charnwood Foraging came to the October meeting, she was born in the Czech Republic and was taught about preserving and foraging by her grandmother and about the natural healing powers of meadow plants by her mother who was a nurse. Her childhood was spent foraging in the woods behind her house. Having moved to the UK over 20 years ago, she started on a journey to share her knowledge with friends and extended this to running courses and taking groups on walks to identify plants and flowers which are edible. We were shown slides to help identify the many varieties of both edible and poisonous fungi

November meeting brought Danny Wells to Rolleston to show us his excellent slides to accompany his interesting talk about the English obsession with gardening around the Victorian and early 20<sup>th</sup> century period. It was really fascinating to hear the background of so many well known Derbyshire gardens.

We are inviting him again later in the year to talk about another of his fascinating subjects.

We didn't meet in December and had our usual post Christmas lunch at the Roebuck, Draycott in the Clay in January. This was a very enjoyable lunch with good company and lovely food

Our meetings resume again on February 11th at 10am at Rolleston Club and here are the dates for the next 3 meetings:

Feb 11th – Mike Robson to give us an update on The Rolleston Orchard

Mar 11th – Debbie Richardson shares her involvement with opening her garden in Stretton to the public as part of the National Garden Scheme

April 8th – Peter Amour shares some lovely photos to accompany his talk on 'The Amber Autumn's and Golden Glens of Scotland

Plans are in hand for Coach trips to the Moreton Hall Tulip Festival near Redditch in May and to Wollerton Old Hall near Market Drayton in June. More details will be posted to the u3a website Gardening Group, when costings and bookings have been finalised

We welcome all members of u3a to join our group.

Please contact Norma Clarke, via the link on the website for more information

## Long and Challenging Walking Groups



The final quarter of 2025 was another transition period for the groups.

The good news was that I was able to get back to coordinating the groups. Having hydrocephalus was no fun. But thanks to our great NHS, in particular the QMC in Nottingham, I am back on my feet.

I would like to thank Jane very much for organising the walks during my 5-month hiatus. She did a stellar job! 🌞🌞

The groups themselves had a slippery end to 2025. October's long walk was a mizzly, yet well attended, 6 miler around Hartshorne, thank you Graham!

The November long walk had to be cancelled due to poor weather. And Rex's December walk was a wet wander around Whitwick. Two lovely walks, but I'll have a word with the weather man.

Rex's October Challenging walk was a first for the group. A 6-mile long walk with a couple of challenges. It was a lovely walk around Winster, and a clear out for the lungs and arteries.

Novembers Challenging walk was the 10th and final stage of the Trent Valley Way, ending in Newark-on-Trent. It was also very nice, and through some pretty villages, but it's getting to be a long way from home.

The December Challenging walk didn't occur since it fell on Christmas Day!

Bah-Humbug Santa 🎅. Here's to a brighter beginning in 2026 as we start The Centenary Way.

I hope to see you on a walk soon...

Happy Hiking Everyone,

Herb



## German Conversation

Auf Wiedersehen und Danke Vielmals, Ruth!

When Burton U3A was founded back in April 2011, one of the first groups – if not the first – to get off the ground was the German conversation group. Its coordinator was the lovely Ruth Roots who had previously organised a group in Hemel Hempstead before she and her husband, John, moved to Tutbury to be closer to their daughter.

She generously hosted the group, which met weekly apart from short breaks at Christmas, Easter and in August, in her beautiful cottage which has a gorgeous garden and is surrounded by magnificent views over the surrounding countryside. Ruth could be a hard taskmaster at times, and we'll always remember her "auf Deutsch bitte" instructions. However, during the break, she kindly permitted us to speak in English, and served tea and biscuits in proper china cups with saucers!



The group, which started with 12 members, shared "Nachrichten" (their news), translated articles and even two books, and enjoyed games and puzzles. Members' language competence varied but 3 were native German speakers, and although everyone was keen to improve their proficiency, the main aim was always fun and friendship, a great support to those going through difficult times. This was helped enormously by Ruth's very naughty sense of humour, and there was always lots of laughter.

During the Covid epidemic the group continued to "meet" via Zoom, and although this worked well, we were all delighted when it was deemed safe to return to Ruth's home. After almost 15 years of hosting, Ruth has understandably decided that it is time to retire. It's difficult to express adequately our thanks and appreciation for all she has done and we wish her and John every happiness in the future.

The group continues to meet every Wednesday afternoon between 2–4pm, now in the rather less attractive meeting room at Morrisons in Burton. If you have any interest in joining, please contact Karin Kay – also a founder member! – at [karinikay@icloud.com](mailto:karinikay@icloud.com).

## Social Activities: holidays

Our next holiday will be to Scotland staying at The Tinto Hotel for 4 nights from Monday 9th to Friday 13th November. Planned visits to Edinburgh, The Royal Yacht Britannia, The Kelpies, The Falkirk Wheel and New Lanark. Full details and cost will be on the website as soon as we have confirmation.

Booking with Dianne Brewster [diannebrewster@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:diannebrewster@hotmail.co.uk) once we have the price.

## Craft Group



As Christmas 2025 drew near our Craft Group got busy, even managing to squeeze 2 sessions into November. With all of us full of Festive cheer we kicked off by making Christmas cards with a difference; the difference being that clear domes were attached to the front of the cards complete with some fake snow. The effect it created was akin to looking through a window out onto a picturesque winter scene.



Next continuing with the festive theme we embarked on making Angels using the Paper Folding method we had used before to make Hedgehogs and Valentine Hearts.

Yes it was time consuming and a bit fiddly but the outcome was well worth it and we ended up with most cutest of Angels.



## Folk Group

On Thursday, 15th January, our Folk Group gathered at The Mulberry at the College in Burton for a late Christmas lunchtime celebration. Twenty-three of us, including some partners, enjoyed a delightful three-course meal. The Mulberry went above and beyond by preparing a special vegan dish just for us.



Our group usually meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month, from 1:00pm to 3:00pm, at the Priory in Stretton.

# Did you know ...

## **Riviera Travel**

If you are booking a holiday directly with Riviera Travel you can help our u3a. Tell Riviera Travel at the time of booking and they will send us some money at no cost to you. Terms and conditions apply, details can be found here:

<https://www.u3a.org.uk/about/our-partners/riviera-travel>

## **Gift Aid**

If you pay income tax or capital gains tax, then you can help our u3a.

This means that £1 of your membership subscription of £10 is worth £2:50 at no cost to yourself. To qualify for gift aid, you must pay income tax or capital gains tax at least equal to the amount that Burton on Trent u3a reclaims on your subscription and donations in a tax year.

Contact our membership secretary in writing to advise that you want to enable gift aid, include the following details: our charity name Burton on Trent u3a and your full name (with title) and home address.

## **Online membership**

If you use our online membership facility you can help our membership secretary massively. We have 950 members currently with 526 memberships being processed manually, most by post. Imagine opening each envelope, reading it, updating the details on our system, writing out a membership card, putting it into your SAE and posting it and then banking it. If you renew online all the processing is done by the system.

Please help our volunteer membership secretary to help you by using online membership. You can sign up using Burton on Trent's membership portal here:

<https://u3abeacon.org.uk/u3aportal.php?u3a=168&sc=BQTC>

# Interest groups

## Arts and crafts

### Art 1

Weekly on Wednesday afternoons 1:30 pm–4:00 pm. St Marys Church Hall Stretton  
Contact: Robert: 07517 316382

### Painting for beginners

Monthly on Thursday mornings 10:00 am–12:00 pm. 3rd Thursday. Priory Centre  
Contact: Barry: 07974 203429

### Art appreciation

Monthly on Thursday mornings 10:00 am–12:00 pm 3rd Thursday. Anslow Village Hall.  
Contact: Christina: 07940 712416

### Photography 1

Weekly on Wednesday afternoons 1:30 pm–4:00 pm. St Marys Church Hall Stretton  
Contact: Vic: 01283 54291029

### Craft

Monthly on Wednesday 2:00 pm–4:00 pm. Brook House. 1st Wednesday.  
Contact: Joan: via the website

## Dancing

### Ballroom Dancing

Weekly on Friday afternoons. Stretton  
Contact: Dianne: 01283 540056

### Line Dancing

Weekly on Monday afternoons  
2:15 pm–3:45 pm  
Contact: Janet: 01283 541708

## History

### Antiquarian

Rolleston. Monthly on Wednesdays 10:00 am – 12:00 pm, 4th Wednesday  
Contact: Gill: via the website

### History

Burton, Monthly on Thursdays 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. 2nd Thursday  
Contact: Dave: via the website

### Historic Churches

Various locations, Monthly on Thursdays  
10:00 am – 12:00 pm, 3rd Thursday  
Contact: Sue: 07751 240918

## Games

### Bridge

Weekly on Friday mornings 10am – 12pm.  
Burton.  
Contact: Neil: via the website

### Bridge for beginners

Weekly on Tuesdays 12:30pm – 2:30 pm.  
Burton  
Contact: Neil: via the website

### Canasta

Weekly on Friday afternoons 1:45 pm  
Stapenhill  
Contact: Pauline: via the website

### Cribbage

Stapenhill, Monthly on 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesdays  
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm,  
Contact: Mary: 01283 543836

### Crown Green Bowls

Location tbc, Weekly on Tuesdays am + pm  
April – September  
Contact: Rosemary: 01283 561959

### Crown Green Bowls

Stretton, Weekly on Fridays 2:00 pm–4:00  
pm. April – September  
Contact: Dave: via the website

### Indoor Carpet Bowls

Church Gresley, Weekly on Tuesdays  
12:30 pm – 2:30 pm, summer months only  
Contact: Malcolm: via the website

### Rummikub

Stapenhill, Weekly on Mondays 2:00 pm  
Contact: Jean: via the website

### Whist

Stapenhill, Monthly on 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays  
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm  
Contact: Janet: 01283 566284

### Backgammon

The Plough, Horninglow Road North  
2nd and 4th Monday of each month  
Contact: Michael: via the website

## Literature

### Books

Stapenhill, Monthly on Tuesday afternoons,  
1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday  
Contact: Jenny: 07812 104186

### Books 2

Plough Inn, Monthly on Thursdays 12:00 pm–  
2:00 pm, 2nd Thursday  
Contact: Mandy: via the website

### The Bible's 3 Rs

Church Gresley, Monthly on Thursdays 1:30  
pm – 3:30 pm, 3rd Thursday  
Contact: David: via the website

## Languages

### French Advanced

Rolleston,  
Weekly on Mondays 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm  
Contact: Margaret: 01283 752314

### French Intermediate

Various locations,  
Weekly on Mondays 2:00 pm–4:00 pm  
Contact: Colin: via the website

### French Intermediate

Weekly, Tuesday afternoons  
Contact: Lynne: 01283 704002

### French Intermediate

Weekly, Tuesday mornings  
Contact: Kyrin: 01283 701069

### German

Morrisons  
Weekly on Wednesday afternoons  
Contact: Karin: via the website

### Spanish Intermediate

Burton,  
Weekly on Mondays 9:30 am–11:00 am  
Contact: Paul: via the website

## Music

### Folk Group

Stretton, Monthly on 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays  
1:00 pm–3:00 pm  
Contact: Scott: via website

### Jazz

Rolleston  
Weekly on Tuesdays 2:00 pm–4:30 pm  
Contact: Sandra: 07513 989930

### Music Appreciation

Stretton, Monthly on Fridays 10:30 am – 12:00 pm, 3rd Friday  
Contact: Mark: 01283 538591

### Singing

Stretton  
Weekly on Mondays 2:00 pm–4:00 pm  
Contact: Margaret: 01283 520385

### Ukulele

Stretton, Monthly on 1st & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays  
1:30 pm–3:30 pm  
Contact: Sandra: 07513 989930

## Natural history

### Gardening

Various locations, Monthly on Wednesdays  
10:00 am–12:00 pm. 2nd Wednesday  
Contact: Norma: via the website

## Social

### Luncheon Group

Various locations  
Monthly  
Contact: Barry: 07974 203429

### Wine Appreciation

Stretton, Monthly on Tuesdays 7:30 pm –  
9:30 pm. Last Tuesday of the Month  
Contact: Sue: 07751 240918

### Social Activities

Various locations  
Contact: Dianne: 07510 327156

### Wine Not?

Horninglow, Monthly on Mondays 7:00 pm  
2nd Monday  
Contact: Chris: via the website

### Sunday Lunch

Various locations  
Monthly, 2nd Sunday  
Contact: Barry: via the website

## Walking

### Strollers

Various locations, Monthly on Fridays  
10:00 am–11:30 am. 3rd Friday  
Contact: Mike: via website

### Walks – Long

Various locations, Monthly on Fridays  
10:00 am, 2nd Friday  
Contact: Jane: via website

### Walks – Short

Various locations. Monthly on Friday  
mornings. 1st Friday  
Contact: Sue: via website

### Walks – Challenging

Various locations, Monthly on Thursdays  
9:00 am, Last Thursday of month  
Contact: Herb: via the website

## Sport

### **Badminton**

Meadowside

Weekly on Monday and Friday mornings

Contact: Hugh: via the website

### **Pickleball Friday**

Meadowside

Weekly on Fridays 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm

Contact: Richard: via the website

### **Cycling**

Various locations, Spring – Autumn

Monthly on 1st & 3rd Wednesdays

Contact: Peter: 07709 713191

### **Table Tennis**

Burton

Weekly on Tuesdays 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Contact: Mick: via the website

### **Cycling 2**

Various locations, Monthly on Wednesdays

9:30 am. 2nd Wednesday

Contact: Jane: via the website

### **Walking Football**

Meadowside

Weekly on Thursdays 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Contact: Chris: via the website

### **Pickleball**

Meadowside, Weekly on Mondays 12:00 pm  
and Fridays 11:00 am

Contact: Hugh: via the website

## **Join an activity or Interest Group**

Burton-on-Trent u3a offers a wide range of interest and activity groups—each one a great way to learn something new, meet others, and enjoy shared passions. As a member, you're welcome to join as many groups as you like!

### **Not Yet a Member?**

You're welcome to try before you join! Non-members may attend up to two group sessions (either two visits to one group, or one visit to each of two different groups). Standard session fees apply. Non-members cannot attend Social Activities outings or Luncheons

Join up to Burton on Trent u3a – for a £10 annual fee you get to join any of our groups, and come along to any of our monthly open meetings.

# Meet the team

Person	Committee role	Contact
Chrys Smedley	Chair	chair@botu3a.org
Kathy Hines	Treasurer	treasurer@botu3a.org
Hugh Rodger	Secretary Accessibility lead	secretary@botu3a.org access@botu3a.org
Barry Gosling	Vice-chair Welfare lead	vchair@botu3a.org welfare@botu3a.org
Richard Dryden	Vice-chair & GDPR lead Newsletter editor	gdpr@botu3a.org news@botu3a.org
Jane Kent	Beacon coordinator Membership support	beacon@botu3a.org
Alan Poore	Financial assistant	finance@botu3a.org
Michael Bartlett	Interest group coordinator	groups@botu3a.org
Beverley Bhaskare	Minutes secretary	minutes@botu3a.org
Jane Hance	Publicity lead	publicity@botu3a.org
Valerie Bentinck	Events Secretary	events@botu3a.org

Person	Supporting role	Contact
Christine Davenport	Communications lead	comms@botu3a.org
Linda Walker	Membership secretary	membership@botu3a.org
Peter Wildsmith	Coffee morning meet & greet	
Chris Hance	Website Coordinator	web@botu3a.org

Please send in your news, stories, planned activities and photos for the summer newsletter by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2026. Thanks, *Richard*



St George's church, Ticknall  
Historic Churches group visit, January 2026  
Photo: Sue Fraser