



# Swanland u3a Newsletter

Registered Charity No: 1078104

## Learn, Laugh, Live.

No: 90. July 2026

### *30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary special edition*

I do hope that by the time you read the July edition of the newsletter the weather has finally warmed up and you are able to get out and about in the garden — preferably with a cool drink in hand rather than an umbrella!

My thanks go out, on behalf of all of us, to those members who helped organise the very successful 30 Year Celebration Event held on 7th May. I am delighted to say it was extremely well attended and the convivial atmosphere throughout the day clearly showed just how much the three speakers were appreciated — deservedly so in my view.

I was particularly pleased (though not entirely surprised) to hear the feedback from the speakers themselves, all of whom commented on what a wonderfully warm and receptive audience they had encountered. It says a great deal about the friendly spirit of Swanland u3a.

And that is certainly not the end of things. We still have a full programme of talks, presentations and activities taking us right through to the end of the year, details of which you will find elsewhere in this newsletter. I look forward to meeting many more of you at our Thursday afternoon meetings and hearing your thoughts and ideas on how we can continue to make Swanland u3a an even better experience for everyone.

One of the great strengths of u3a is that it belongs to all of us. Whether you are a long-standing member or have only recently joined, your ideas, enthusiasm and involvement are what keeps the organisation lively, welcoming and successful. Do please remember to spread the word, we would welcome more members to share our experience - so don't keep it a secret!

Until then, enjoy the summer, enjoy the programme ahead — and if the sunshine does finally arrive, do try not to spend all your time in the garden and forget to come to the meetings!

**Mark**

## Inside This Issue

Dates for your Diary .....	2
Thursday Presentations .....	3
Reflections .....	4
Swanland u3a – How We Started .....	6
Interviews with our Founder Members .....	8
Interest Groups.....	11
Turning Back Time .....	12
Notes from the AGMs 1997 - 2001 .....	13
30 Years of Change .....	15
Writing For Fun Group .....	15
The Photography Group.....	17
30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Swanland u3a Newsletters. ....	19
A Member’s Perspective of our u3a .....	20
Tech Talk - The Importance of Technology during Covid .....	21
What You Need To Know To Keep In Touch: .....	23
Executive Committee from 2026-27 .....	23
Newsletter Deadline .....	23

### Dates for your Diary

August	Summer Break.
Sept 17th	Swanland u3a - 30th Anniversary at St Barnabus.
<b>October 1st</b>	<b>Printed newsletters available for collection at the Thursday meeting for those who receive them.</b>

## THURSDAY PRESENTATIONS

Date	Subject	Speaker
July 2 <sup>nd</sup>	A Family Holocaust Story	Tim Mulroy – Northern Holocaust Education Group.
July 16 <sup>th</sup>	A talk on Morecambe and Wise	Steve Short - a professional entertainer and member of the magic circle.
Aug	Summer Break	
Sept 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Swanland u3a - 30th Anniversary	
Sept 17 <sup>th</sup>	Olaf's Tales of Battle, 1066	Chris Cade – freelance actor and story teller.
Oct 1 <sup>st</sup>	Cyprus, Blessed by Nature Cursed by History	Malcolm Brookes – for many years worked for MoD schools as a teacher including in Cyprus.
St Barnabas Church, Main Street, Swanland 2pm to 3pm followed by tea and coffee		

**Su3a Secretary NEEDED:** This role is basically to organise and liaise with various sections of the local and national u3a. It is NOT to produce minutes or agendas. For more details contact Mark (Chair).

### How Things Change!



#### **100 years ago**

Many people had a horse, only the rich had a car.

#### **Today**

Many people have a car and only the rich have horses

**Due to space considerations the quiz has been removed for this issue but will return in October.**

## Reflections

The Swanland u3a celebrated its 30th Anniversary on Thursday, 7th May. Over one hundred members and non-members celebrated this wonderful achievement at Lazaat's Hotel in Cottingham. We also had attendees from partner u3as within the ACCORD.



The first speaker was Robin Diaper, the Curator of Maritime and Social History, which is part of the Hull Museums Service. His talk was entitled 'Sailing into unchartered waters' and gave us a fascinating insight into the five projects that are currently underway in Hull, The Maritime

Museum, Spurn Lightship, The Arctic Corsair, The Deep and the North End Shipyard on High Street. It was an extremely interesting talk that gave us an overview of the massive developments that are taking place in Hull, that will soon establish our city as a major centre of maritime history. Excellent slides guided us through these important projects. Hopefully, in the summer we will all be able to visit the Hull Maritime museum after its complete overhaul. All these projects are very exciting ventures!

Hannah Stamp then spoke to us in her role as the archivist at the East Riding Archives based at the 'Champney Treasure House' in Beverley. Her enthusiasm was very evident as she spoke to us about 'Keeping History Alive' and showing us round the building with her excellent slide show. Their base is accessible to everyone and provides an opportunity to browse in the reading room, explore records in the research room, look at online collections or perhaps just ask for advice from the highly qualified staff. Hannah's request for us to explore our own archives at home was taken onboard and provided interesting conversations over lunch! At the close of her talk, we were shown pictures and documents relating to Swanland which were very interesting.



Our final speaker was Richard Avery, prominent actor and Artistic Director of the East Riding Theatre in Beverley. His talk was entitled 'In at the Half'. This

saying is used in theatres and means that the actors have to be in the theatre, half an hour before being called to the wings. A fascinating fact! He was in the R.S.C., Young Vic, Bristol Old Vic and has appeared in many TV series including Emmerdale, Coronation Street, The Bill and A Touch of Frost. Richard spoke about 'growing up' and how he never really felt happy until he entered the world of 'theatre', despite the protestations of his parents. He was intrigued at the many facets of theatre life and has spent the rest of his life doing the job he loved. Many may remember his liaison with Neil King, when they toured the local villages with 'Other Lives Productions'. Here in Swanland they were very popular! In 2014 the 'East Riding Theatre' was opened. It is housed in an old, converted Baptist Chapel. It was founded by Vincent Regan and after a huge community effort, local theatre came to Beverley. ERT is run mostly by volunteers, and after a difficult time, financially, it had a big injection of funds when 'Dad's Army' filmed there! It is obvious that Richard is passionate about the Beverley theatre, and indeed I am sure that many of our audience will have enjoyed a huge number of productions over the years. Thanks, Richard, for ensuring that live theatre is alive and well in Beverley.



Thank you to everyone who contributed in any way towards our Anniversary Celebration, especially:

The Anniversary organising committee for all their hard work:

Alison and John [redacted], Anne [redacted] Jan [redacted]

John [redacted], Joyce [redacted], and Mariam [redacted].

Keith [redacted] who produced all the publicity material.

John [redacted] who organised and set up the sound equipment, computers and projector system.

Peter [redacted] and the other founder members of Swanland u3a in 1996.

Lazaat's Hotel for looking after us so well and providing a delicious lunch.

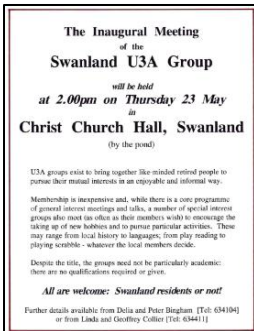
It was definitely a day to remember!

# Swanland u3a – How We Started

*The following was written by Malcolm [redacted] in 1999.*

Swanland's branch of the University of the Third Age was launched at a public meeting in May 1996 and held its first proper lecture meeting in September 1996.

It came about because Jim [redacted] found that Hessel u3a would accept no new members. He and his friends Delia and Peter [redacted] decided to start their own and they invited Linda and Geoff [redacted] and Malcolm [redacted] to join them.



Together they advertised a public meeting in Christ Church Hall for Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1996. To their amazement over 80 people turned up, some not even being able to get into the hall! There was clearly a need for a u3a in Swanland. Barbara [redacted] offered to wash up the tea things and was co-opted onto the committee. Enrolment began at a meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> June and the membership rapidly expanded to over 180. At the first AGM on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1997, a constitution was adopted. By then Jennie [redacted] had joined the committee to organize outings.

Since then Swanland u3a has grown steadily and in July 1999 its membership stood at 309.<sup>1</sup> The subscription continued at only £5 a year with a 50p charge for each lecture meeting attended. Besides the lectures on two Thursdays in each month, there were a number of interest groups that met once or twice a month, usually in the daytime, often in members' homes. These groups reflected members' interests:

Ambling, Art and Craft, Bridge, Creative Writing, Discussion Group, Embroidery, Family History, Gardeners, German, French, Latin, Spanish, Literature, Local History, Play Reading, Scottish Dancing, Walking, Wine tasting and Yoga. Courses were run from time to time on First Aid and Computing. Visits were arranged at home and abroad. There was a trip to Rouen in 1998 and a trip to Bruges in 1999.

The University of the Third Age sets out to provide stimulating activities for those who are retired from full time employment and no longer have parental responsibilities. A u3a is what its members make it. It need not be academic. No qualifications are asked for or given. There are some 400 u3a groups in the UK affiliated to the Third Age Trust, with about 100,000 individual members.<sup>2</sup>

In Swanland the u3a has proved to be an admirable way of meeting new friends, developing old interests and discovering new ones. There is a determination not to limit membership by numbers or by the area in which people live. The chairman has to resign after two years and there are rules to ensure that there are regular changes to the committee.

This is a flexible and friendly community of people creating new interest groups to reflect their own wishes. In 1999 its direction was more social than strictly academic, but if one thing is certain any u3a will change if its membership wants it to change!



The committee in Sept 1999 was Malcolm [redacted], Jim [redacted] Brain [redacted] Malcolm [redacted] Peter [redacted] Jim [redacted] Jennie [redacted], Pauline [redacted] Tony [redacted] and David [redacted]

There were three other u3a groups in the East Riding in 1999: Hessle, Hull<sup>3</sup> and Driffield. Members of Swanland u3a encouraged other groups to start up in Beverley, Cottingham and Hedon.<sup>4</sup>

**Malcolm [redacted] (1999)**

**UPDATE:**

1. As of May 2026, Swanland u3a currently has 441 members.
2. In 2026 there are over 1,000 u3as with around 400,000 members.
3. Hull u3a no longer exists.
4. The Beverley & District u3a and Cottingham u3a were established in 2000, and Hedon & Holderness u3a in 2016.

## Interviews with Our Founder Members

Peter [REDACTED] and Pauline [REDACTED]

To mark our 30th Anniversary I discussed our u3a with both Peter and Pauline. Both have valuable insights into what makes our u3a so important. The full interviews will be on our Website in the 30th Anniversary section.

**Peter** [REDACTED] was the first Chairman and together with his wife Delia was instrumental in establishing our u3a. He has been involved in several Interest Groups and other u3a activities over the last 30 years.

*John*

***Peter, we now have computerised technology such as QR codes and Social Media to help advertise our u3a - what methods did you use 30 years ago?***

*Good publicity is obviously very valuable. We advertised in local Parish Magazines as well as the 'free paper'. Indeed, I became the 'Swanland Correspondent' for the latter which enabled me to ensure good publicity! My abiding memory of that time was walking around the village posting membership forms by hand - I have never ceased to be amazed at the variety of letter boxes!*

**In common with many of our members over the last 30 years I am grateful to the u3a for helping to make my retirement a positive experience. Do you recognise that sentiment?**

*Indeed. I feel that the u3a was (and is) necessary for a happy retirement. It certainly changed our lives and that was due to the knowledge, skills and commitment of everyone involved. An example of this are the wonderful trips abroad which were very popular. I particularly remember a trip to Trier in Germany, the base of the Emperor Constantine organised by Jenny Thomas who used her experience as a travel courier to provide the most interesting itinerary for her fellow members.*

**The social aspect of the u3a has also been a consistently important part of its appeal.**

*This was something I realised through the Walking Group. As an activity walking is very pleasurable but if you walk in a group, you also talk to others. Our first walk was in the Huggate area; after the walk Delia and I said that we were having lunch at 'The Wolds Inn' if anyone would like to join us. Thereafter lunch after a walk became a regular event helping to create many friendships over the years.*

**Walking and other physical activities are the 'laugh' and 'live' aspect of our motto 'learn, laugh and live.'**

*It is important that u3as provide a balance of activities - Interest Groups can be about anything at all. Surely this is one of the strengths of the u3a - so much is possible and all that is needed is the enthusiasm of members. I understand that there is even a 'Belly Dancing' Group in one u3a.*

**I believe Swanland u3a has the only 'Wild Swimming' Group in the country. But whatever the group, there must be a convenor. They are at the heart of what the u3a is about.**

*Very much so. They have to be good communicators; well organised and reliable. And of course, they are volunteers - volunteering brings many benefits to the individual as well as the group. And the Committee is also vital - they are involved in everything from finding convenors to accounts, liaising with the national leadership and organising tea and coffee.*

**There has not been an Event Day for several years but this year to mark our 30th we have 'Community, Culture and Heritage' at Lazaats on May 7th.**

*I hope this marks a new beginning for these days as they have always been extremely popular. They have always been open to members of other u3a's and the quality of speakers has been excellent*

**Finally, what would be your message to new members?**

*Keep an open mind, volunteer and take part. 'Volunteer' is the most important part.*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Pauline** [redacted]'s membership number is 10 making her the first member to join after the Committee. A former librarian at Hull University her contribution to the u3a has been wide ranging.

**Pauline, what are your memories of the inaugural meeting?**

*The enthusiasm for the u3a project was marvellous, the hall was full and Jim Wilson had to keep going out to find more chairs. Some of those present didn't quite know what the u3a was about but they understood Jim's vision which was that the u3a's activities should be 'for us, by us'.*

**You have convened several groups - what do you feel is the most important thing to make a group successful?**

*A friendly atmosphere in groups is really important for learning and this comes about because members are not at work, so there is less stress and people are more relaxed. This has to be cultivated: our Literature Group grew too big and had to split into two to make it workable. But I was anxious to maintain a sense of unity between them so organised an annual Garden Party, made possible by the kindness of Ursula Winder who let us use her lovely garden.*

**Many new members are surprised at both the national and international scope of the u3a idea.**

*Many of our members are loyal to their group which is good but there doesn't seem to always be the loyalty to the national organisation or a recognition of the international dimension...after all the u3a originated in France.*

**What do you consider to be our main challenge going forward into the next 30 years?** *Recruitment. Swanland is a relatively small and defined area. Also, I think there are fewer older people in the village and more young families or working couples.*

**To conclude - what are your thoughts on 30 years of membership?**

*I feel a strong sense of commitment to the u3a, it has given me so much and I have always wanted to give something back. If I see a need and I can do it, so I will!*

## INTEREST GROUPS

Interest Group	Meeting Details
<b>ARTS, CRAFTS and LITERATURE</b>	
Art Appreciation (2 groups)	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thurs of the month 10am
	4 <sup>th</sup> Thurs of the month 2pm
Art – Hands On	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Mondays. 2.00 - 4.00 <b>[OA]</b>
Book Group	4 <sup>th</sup> Thurs of the month. 7.30pm
Book Swap Table <b>NEW</b>	Every Thursday Lecture meeting <b>[CA]</b>
Literature (2 groups)	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday of month 2pm <b>[OA]</b>
	1 <sup>st</sup> Friday of month 2pm <b>[OA]</b>
Poetry Appreciation	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wed of month 2- 4pm <b>[CA]</b>
Wine Appreciation	3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month 7pm
Writing for Fun	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wed of the month 10.00am <b>[CA]</b>
<b>GAMES and SPORTS</b>	
Badminton	Most Fridays 2pm
Bridge	Most Mondays 2pm <b>[OA]</b>
Canasta (2 groups)	Wednesdays 10am OR Fridays 10am <b>[OA]</b>
Cribbage	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of the month 10am <b>[OA]</b>
Croquet	Every Friday. 2pm. (April to September)
Golf (experienced)	Contact Convenors
Mahjong	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of the month 2pm
Scrabble	3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month 2pm
Quiz	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month 7.30pm <b>[OA]</b>
<b>LANGUAGES</b>	
French Conversation (2 groups)	1 <sup>st</sup> Wed of the month 10am
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thurs of the month 2pm <b>FULL</b>
Beginner's Italian	2nd and 4th Wed at 10.00 <b>[CA]</b>
Italian Self-Help	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Weds of the month. 10am <b>[CA]</b>
Latin	4 <sup>th</sup> Thurs of the month. 10.30am <b>[OA]</b>
Latin Improvers	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thurs of the month 2pm <b>[CA]</b>

Spanish - Basic Conversational	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursdays of the month 2pm
Spanish Advanced Self-Help	Every two weeks 2pm <b>[OA]</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	
Discussion Group	1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month 10am <b>[OA]</b>
Luncheon Club	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tues of the month 12.00 <b>[OA]</b>
Philosophy	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday of the month 2pm <b>[CA]</b>
Photography	4th Thursday of the month at 2.00
Science & Technology	Contact Convenor
Supper Club	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sat of the month The time is variable
<b>MUSIC, THEATRE, DANCING &amp; KEEP FIT</b>	
Choir	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursdays of the month 3.30pm
English Country Dancing	2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of the month 1.45pm
Guitar	Contact Convenor
Singing for Fun	4th Wed of the month 2.15 to 3.45 <b>[CA]</b>
Theatre Visits	Contact Convenor
<b>OUTDOOR PURSUITS (also see Games &amp; Sports)</b>	
Gardening	4 <sup>th</sup> Tues of the month 10am <b>[CA]</b>
Walking Short	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Weds of the month 10am
Walking Longer	2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Weds of the month 9.45am <b>[OA]</b>
Wild Swimming	Wednesdays, 10am Welton Waters

[OA] = Group is open during August. [CA] = Group is closed during August.  
Other groups please check with the convenor.

## Turning Back Time

### The Original Interest Groups in July 1996:

Group	Members	Group	Members
Art & Craft	20	Literature	18
Bridge	7	Music Group	27
Computing	7	Walking Group	31
Family History	9	Visits Group	29
Foreign Languages	14	Theatre Trips	28
Gardening	27	Play Reading	21
Industrial Archaeology	5		

# Notes from the AGMs 1997 - 2001

## Chairman's Reports

### March 1997

If I had been told last year that we would have 15 interest groups, I would not have believed it. Most of the groups are fairly small, but nine are running regularly and are very active indeed, ... only two are either ailing or fading away.

We have managed to find a successor for Geoff [*treasurer*], but sadly there have been no other new nominations for the committee. This concerns me, for the health of a u3a depends on the vigour of its membership. Our new constitution does not allow offices to stay in their posts for long, so the future will be bright if plenty of members volunteer to share in running the organisation.

### March 1998

By the end of December 1997 we had enrolled 209 members, while the figure now stands at 225. We can also report that attendance at the Thursday meetings is growing, with our highest figure to date standing at 105.

From next September our lecturer meetings ... will be on the first and third Thursday of the month and not every fortnight. This will make space on the second and fourth Thursday for other interest groups to meet.

We have no nomination for secretary, so the post will have to be filled by the new committee at the next meeting.

### March 1999

This year I have to report we have just topped 300 members, having 301 members at the moment.

We have started sharing interest groups in a very small way with Hessele u3a.

The growth in numbers has several advantages. We are able to recommend keeping the subscription at the same level [*£5*] for another year and to charge

no more for the Thursday lectures. *[originally 50p per meeting, including interest groups.]*

### **March 2000**

Membership has now risen to 334 with a maximum attendance at the Thursday lectures of 153. Only around 35% of our members actually live in Swanland, around 45% live in the surrounding villages of Ferriby, Hessle, Willerby, Kirkella, Westella, Anlaby and Cottingham.

I am pleased to say that Peter [redacted] not only content with forming one u3a, has gone on to give encouragement to others. Beverley u3a is due to hold its first public meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April.

A person that I would like to thank is not even a member of the u3a – she does not qualify. This is Helen of the St. John's Ambulance. She is our insurance. Since I instituted the attendance of a member of St John's, strangely none of you has had a funny turn. She has attended more lectures than most of you, and I am pleased to say that she has told me that she has enjoyed them all.



### **March 2001**

We may have lost members as a result of the increase in annual subscription from £5 to £9, even though this meant less annual expenditure if one attended 9 lectures or more in the total of 22. Some of them joined the Cottingham and Beverley u3as that we formed during the year.

Your committee and Trustees have created three initiatives during the year: Our third initiative arose from the close proximity of our neighbouring u3as. It is rare that five u3as should exist in such close proximity that they share the same telephone area code. In an effort to help them I proposed that we should allow the members of Hessle, Cottingham and Beverley, u3as to join those of our interest groups that are not full. This decision was communicated to the Hessle, Cottingham and Beverley u3as (Hull has no interest groups) with the hope that such an arrangement would be reciprocal. This has been called the "North Humberside u3a Accord".

## 30 Years of Change

### Writing For Fun Group

In common with all writing, publishing and printing the work of Swanland u3a Writing for Fun Group has changed significantly over the last 30 years due to the advent of Information Technology especially personal laptop computers.

As well as being a member of our group for 14 years and Convenor for two I have also published novels and short stories on various digital platforms.



I began writing 30 years ago when many people used the old-fashioned typewriter. It was the normal practice to do the first draft of a piece of writing in long hand; many still sent the sample chapters of a book to a possible publisher in this manner. The way to find a publisher or literary agency was to look in the Artists and

Writers Yearbook which was revised every year. Computers, Word Processing and later developments such as Zoom changed all this.

‘Authors Online’ introduced an e-reader, similar to a Kindle which did not catch on. ‘Vanity Publishing’ became popular where writers had to pay a large sum of money to get their books published and again it was up to them to sell copies of their books. Writers were tempted by this but rarely made a profit from this way of publishing.

Digitalisation means that a book could be submitted and printed as it was ordered, instead of storing copies in a warehouse. A charity developed a service called ‘You Write On’ whereby they would print a book for free and would make their profits by people ordering the book online and then they would print it. This service no longer exists but our u3a Creative Writing Group used it to publish a book of stories and poems jointly with the Swanland School in Nairobi in order to raise money for their charity.

E-readers especially Kindles have been available for almost 20 years. Their storage and battery capability have improved and many have inbuilt lighting and Internet access. There is now a service called ‘Kindle Direct Publishing’ where you can download your written book onto Kindle for people to

purchase to read in that format. They have now advanced this so once the book is downloaded, you can be given an ISBN number, create a front and back cover and request it to be published in paperback.

### **How has our Writing Group changed?**

When I first joined members were bringing their stories along written by hand. The writer had to read it out aloud but none of us had a copy to follow this reading. This meant that opportunities to learn from fellow group members and to give feedback to the writer were both limited. However, the Swanland u3a Writing Group has embraced 'New Technology', thereby making us more effective as a group.

We now produce our work on a computer and email a copy, prior to the meeting, to each member of the group, so it can be read in advance and any comments then can be discussed at the meeting. This is more beneficial than all having to sit through listening to many stories being read out and it is much easier this way to get the full appreciation of a story.

Also, this innovation helped our writing group during Covid, as we were still able to continue our writing and send our stories out via email. At a pre-arranged time, we would meet on Zoom and discuss the stories as we would have done had we met in person. Yes, it was still much more pleasant when we could meet in person after Covid, but at least with this technology the group kept going and also tried something new...We did a joint project with the Photography Group where they submitted photographs which we used as a stimulus for creative writing. The creative choices for both were discussed over Zoom.

Who knows how writing groups will develop in the next thirty years.

***Susan***



Did you know there was a Swanland School in Nairobi?

Read more here:

<https://www.swanlandschoolnairobi.org/our-story/>

## The Photography Group

I have had an interest in photography for many years. However I didn't have time to pursue this during my working life. On retirement in 2007 I decided to join Swanland u3a as they offered Photography and Walking, two groups in which I was interested.

Unfortunately for several years the Photography group was full, therefore it was decided in about 2011 to start a second photography group. I immediately enrolled and we had about a dozen members. Of course, when I joined the u3a photography had undergone major changes since my earlier attempts. It had gone digital. In the early 2000's I had a digital camera and the resulting photographs were grainy and of low quality. I was convinced digital would never rival film. How wrong I was.

In 2007 when I retired I bought a Nikon compact camera with a 10 megapixel sensor, the resulting photographs were seemingly good at the time. However, when seeing what other people were producing with digital single lens reflex cameras (DSLR) I soon found it was time to upgrade so I purchased a Canon 60D DSLR which served me well for several years and subsequently upgraded again later.



Members of the group mainly had DSLR cameras with interchangeable lenses or bridge cameras, similar in shape and size but the lens is not changeable but does have zoom. These cameras generally had full frame 35mm sensors or the smaller APSC sensors, both capable of producing images good enough for printing large photographs for display.

What did we do in the u3a Photography group? Well we followed a similar pattern to the original group, meeting in each other's houses once a month. Generally we had a topic for the month, each member would take photos of their interpretation of the subject and present them for discussion at the following meeting. Pictures were put onto a memory stick to show on a TV screen via a laptop.

Over the years we have had people with varying degrees of expertise and cameras. In true u3a style we helped one another with mixed degrees of success. Especially in the early years we did go out on some photo shoots around Hull, the Fair, Hornsea, Flamborough etc. however as the group changed and we all got older these outside visits dropped off. At our review sessions some of our more informed members of the group would occasionally give instruction on various technical issues to do with technique, camera settings and photo enhancement with programs such as Lightroom or Snapseed etc.

In the early 2000's cameras were incorporated into cell phones however the small sensors and lens limitations meant that the photos were not suitable for any sizable enlargement.

Around 2008 Mirrorless cameras came to the fore, these had interchangeable lenses like the DSLR's but with slightly smaller sensors and no mirror they are lighter and more portable, also what you see through the viewfinder is extremely clear.

Panasonic and Olympus collaborated and introduced the micro four thirds system with more compact lenses. I bought one around 2015 and still use it today. Other manufacturers produced their own versions and with modern developments they produce extremely good results.



Manufacturers are constantly developing their products and smartphone technology has developed in leaps and bounds. Gone are the low quality pictures of the past. Smartphones now have multiple lenses to enable you to take wide angle, normal and telephoto shots, more efficient sensors, controls for altering the speed, aperture, sensitivity and ISO. As well as settings for scene modes such as night time, portrait, food, panorama, macro etc. and even a lens for your selfies. They have apps for editing and enhancing your photos, and of course you can share them with friends straight away.

We now have a new group with a handful of regular members that operates in the same way as previously mentioned and some that just like to turn up for a cup of tea and look at the pictures. Some use cameras, some phones it doesn't matter which you use it's the results that matter.

**John**

## 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Swanland u3a Newsletters.

The Swanland u3a newsletter started on 3 October 1996 as a very basic edition. At this time the membership was 138 members and 14 interest groups. The first official newsletter (number 1) was printed in December 1996 and announced a membership 170 and contained a calendar through to February.

From the beginning Peter [redacted] spent a lot of time “typing, paraphrasing and excising text submitted for publications, having first twisted arms to get people to submit material in the first place.” Malcolm [redacted] would then typeset the material on a computer turning it into “*an eye-catching journal*”. Peter then organised the photocopying, guillotining, page assembly and stapling the booklets. They were then hand delivered, initially by Peter and his wife Delia who “learnt a great deal about the awkwardness of posting newsletters through letterboxes high, low and hidden.” Things that have not changed in the last 30 years.

In December 2003 Peter stood down as editor and was replaced by Jim [redacted]. By March 2008, June [redacted] was the editor and Malcolm, who had compiled the first 35 editions, stepped down and was replaced by [redacted]. These editions included bulletins from the Third Age Trust, newsworthy items from the u3as magazines, news, information and articles.

Today I edit and design the newsletter (also after some arm twisting to obtain articles) and convert it into an electronic PDF version which is emailed to all members with an email address, and uploaded onto our website by Keith [redacted]. The same PDF is also sent to professional printers in Hull, who have computerised machines that will ensure the pages are arranged in the correct order (the last and 1st pages next to each other and the 2nd and penultimate pages printed on the reverse)., and then staple and fold them into the booklets. They print over 130 copies for members who need one, and are destined for at least 19 villages (and Hull) situated between Gilberdyke, Brandesburton, Thorngumbald and Thornton Curtis in Lincolnshire.

As technology, the membership, and editors change, so will the newsletter. I wonder what those changes will consist of in 20 or 30 years' time.

**Anne**

## **A Member's Perspective of our u3a**

About twenty five years ago, as I listened to my friend talking enthusiastically about the u3a lecture she was going to attend, I was curious. Curious enough for me to accompany her to the lecture - my first u3a lecture. It opened my eyes to more fulfilling out-of-work activities. Although I don't recall the topic of the talk, it definitely did leave a mark strong enough for me to join Swanland u3a.

It's a meeting place for like-minded people in a relaxed, social environment with the prospect of joining any group of one's choice. It hosts lectures on varied topics by eminent speakers fortnightly which helps to broaden one's outlook of life. Swanland U3A offers a wide range of academic, leisure, physical, mental and social activities.

As with any organisation, the success of Swanland u3a is the result of its dedicated committee members and many others who take on the responsibility and voluntarily organise and instruct various groups. This became more evident during Covid. Since gathering in groups was against the law, the solution was to meet up on Zoom – the online platform. Converting activities done in person to an online format was a challenge, but within a few weeks the lectures and other classes resumed via Zoom. As for Creative writing – one of the groups -the new method proved to be a better approach which is still followed.

However, it posed a bigger challenge with the Photography group which demanded uploading the photographs to be shown, segregating and displaying one by one along with the Zoom discussions. These were the groups I was familiar with during Covid, but other groups found their own solutions according to the demands. Hence, everyone was compelled to learn new skills on computers during Covid and improve on them.

***Mariam***

## Tech Talk - The Importance of Technology during Covid

The Covid Pandemic presented a serious challenge to all u3as and many other similar organisations - interaction with each other is at the heart of all that we do and this became impossible. A sense of isolation was accompanied by considerable concern about our health and that of loved ones. As we celebrate our 30th Anniversary it is worth reflecting on how we successfully met this challenge.

Swanland u3a had the potential to enable members to remain connected and to follow both their established and new interests but was in danger of becoming irrelevant in what was a terrible situation for everyone. To counter this I both encouraged as many groups as possible to meet online either by Zoom or email as well as using Zoom to host our whole u3a events, principally the Thursday meetings.

I unfairly gained the reputation of being a 'Tech Expert', something very far from the truth! My son helped me to master Zoom by delivering tutorials through the Conservatory window, making me realise that If I could do it so could anyone! Accordingly, Keith [redacted] (i/c our website) and I offered training to as many members as possible thereby not only enabling them to keep involved with the u3a but also to keep in touch with family and friends.

French, the Literature Groups, Science and Technology, plus the Writing group conducted activities by Email and Zoom. The Photography Group used the Screen Share facility on Zoom to view and discuss their work and also enjoyed a joint session with the Writers on Zoom sharing both photographs and writing together with the creative choices underpinning both. As far as I am aware this is the only occasion where two of our groups have collaborated on a joint venture. Now we do not have the pressures of Lockdown to consider it is a way of working that might be of interest to other groups.



We maintained our lecture programme being able to host speakers from across the UK (at bargain prices!) as well as our own members who

volunteered. These included a member of the production team of *'Dads Army'* (two lectures); a noted amateur historian on the Battle of Britain together with the *'History of Aviation in Yorkshire'*; developments in the Covid Vaccination programme plus *'Nutrition in Elite Sport'*. We also hosted a regional 'u3a Day' Zoom event on 'Positive Ageing' where our guests were local councillors.

Other lectures concentrated on how to keep safe. We hosted a Community Banker speaking on Internet Scams; Humberside Police on general Internet Safety and a representative of the Humberside Police and Crime Commissioner's Office on developments in policing.

Zoom enabled us to maintain the social aspect of the u3a. We had a regular virtual Coffee Morning and an Event Day on Chatsworth House - this was followed by a concert featuring 'Fools Gold' who played to us from their studio in Newcastle. My highlight was the Zoom Christmas Party where we enjoyed Music, Quizzes and Carols.

As restrictions eased, we moved to Hybrid Lectures (screen in the Hall and Zoomed on home laptops, tablets etc.) where the dedication of our Tech Team was invaluable.

Finally, our website was used to maintain our members' engagement with learning. The 'Creations' project showcased some of the activities they undertook during Lockdown - from Assistance Dog Training to writing poetry through to Knitting and Model Making. The 'Discovery' section provided guides written by Convenors for anyone wishing to take up a new interest including Painting and Photography.

Our experiences during the Pandemic show how we could develop aspects of our u3as work. Above all, we should celebrate how our organisation came through such a difficult time due in large part to the hard work of many members - lack of space prevents me mentioning everyone but I would like to single out Keith [REDACTED] our Web Administrator who willingly gave his time and technical knowledge for the benefit of others.

**John**

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO KEEP IN TOUCH:

### Executive Committee from 2026-27

<b>Chair</b> Mark [redacted] chair@swanlandu3a.org.uk	<b>Vice Chair &amp; Speaker Finder</b> Paul [redacted] vice-chair@swanlandu3a.org.uk
<b>Treasurer</b> Rosalind [redacted] treasurer@swanlandu3a.org.uk	<b>Secretary</b> <b>Vacant</b> secretary@swanlandu3a.org.uk
<b>Membership Secretary</b> Graham [redacted] memsec@swanlandu3a.org.uk	<b>Meetings Secretary</b> Brenda [redacted] minsec@swanlandu3a.org.uk
<b>Groups Co-ordinator</b> Joyce [redacted] newgroups@swanlandu3a.org.uk	<b>Web Administrator</b> Keith [redacted] webadmin@swanlandu3a.org.uk
<b>Meet &amp; Greet/Chairs:</b> John [redacted]	
<b>Details are on our website:</b> <a href="https://www.swanlandu3a.org.uk/u3acontacts.htm">https://www.swanlandu3a.org.uk/u3acontacts.htm</a> .	

### Swanland u3a Contacts for Information and Help.

info@swanlandu3a.org.uk

chair@swanlandu3a.org.uk

memsec@swanlandu3a.org.uk or 01482 631497

### Newsletter Deadline

The closing deadline for the submission of articles for the  
October 2026 newsletter is:

**1<sup>st</sup> September 2026**

Send to: [newseditor@swanlandu3a.org.uk](mailto:newseditor@swanlandu3a.org.uk)

Material Copyright © 2011 - 2026 Swanland u3a. All Rights Reserved.

Printed by Kall Kwik, South Church Side, Hull