



# A big thank you

The strength of any u3a depends on its membership and interest groups.

Here at Forest Town & District u3a everyone has played their part in our success story. Having just celebrated our 10th birthday, there can be no doubt how successful it has been and, judging by the number of cars in the Arena car park for our general meetings, that success looks sure to continue.

As another year nears its end, I am grateful to the group leaders for their imagination and hard work in organising all the various interest groups.

I would also like to thank members of our Executive Committee for their enthusiastic participation, cooperation and contribution in running our u3a.

Finally, a big thank you to all our members for your continued support in choosing to be members of our Forest Town family.

On a personal note, keep well and, whatever your plans are for the festive season, I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and Healthy New Year.



Beryl Guest cutting the cake at the u3a 10th birthday bash on Friday 21 November. Beryl was celebrating her 89th birthday that day.

Kathryn Cope

## War graves remembered



The speaker at the November General Meeting on Friday 7 November was Kathryn Brookes from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Kathryn gave us a whistle-stop tour of their work looking after war graves in 23,000 locations in over 150 countries and territories.

Pictured with Kathryn (centre) are Pauline Sweet (left) and Pauline Marples. Both had brought with them interesting documents to share with Kathryn.

## December meeting



At the General Meeting on Friday 5 December (10.00 for 10.30) we will be welcoming the *Southwell Workhouse Players*.

What they will be performing is a mystery. A Google search only came up with *The WorkHouse Players* based in Gainsborough – it might be them or it might not – if you want to solve the mystery then get along to the Forest Town Arena on 5 December.

## January speaker

The speaker at the General Meeting on Friday 2 January 2026 (10.00 for 10.30 at Forest Town Arena) will be Martin Rowley.

Martin will be speaking about the Criminal Justice System, and providing an interesting journey through our laws, who can charge us, what happens in court and prison and what happens when we are released into the care of the Probation Service.

## Next issue is February

Please send articles or ideas for the February issue to Helen Riby by email: [ftu3anews@gmail.com](mailto:ftu3anews@gmail.com) or by post to: 5 Fal Paddock, Mansfield Woodhouse NG19 9RW by midday on Monday 19 January 2026

## Trace your family tree

At our November meeting we continued our theme of looking at photographs and what they could tell us about our families. Rather than bring along actual photos Pauline put copies from her computer onto a chip (not the sort you eat) but a USB chip. This was given to Andy who plugged it into his computer, then hey presto they appeared on the large screen at Flint Avenue. This proved an easier way for us all to look at and discuss the photos.

The nineteen images told a brief story relating to some of Pauline's family, **the Handley's** from Yorkshire and gave an insight into their lifestyle from around 1900 onward which raised questions and comments. Someone remarked on a fancy plaque on the outside wall of the house – fancy it might be, but it was actually where the coal was emptied into the coal house!!!!

Grandma H sat on the doorstep with curlers in her hair – were they Bobby Pins? Is that an air raid shelter in the garden? What is the occasion when everyone is drinking champagne (a Golden Wedding when the celebration was held at home)? Advice was sought on a family mystery: did the pictures throw any light on who the father of one of people might be?

When Andy zoomed in on a picture of a young man with a milking stool in his hand and a churn in the other, a cow could be seen in the background. A lot of discussion was had on a door mat rather than the two people with musical instruments in the photo. It was suggested the door mat was a pegged rug, or proddy rug depending



where in the country you came from. A photo of three people posing in front of a milk delivery van set people trying to read the name on the side.



A young man posing with a shire horse caused a lot of interest as the horse was bedecked with finery as if going to a show. A picture of a person serving behind a bar around 1962 raised quite a discussion, especially as the cash register showed 2s 11d and there were tins of what looked like Quality Street on the shelves.

The last photo revealed a sadder side of family history as it showed rows of Commonwealth War Graves, which included the last resting place of Pauline's uncle who was killed in Italy in 1944.

PS There will be no meeting in December.



Report by **Ann Cester (alias Pauline Marples)**  
Trace Your Family Tree Group Leaders:  
**Andrew & Julie Rowbottom** Meet 3rd Tuesdays

## A Christmas miracle

The Garden Craft group travelled to Downtown, Grantham on Tuesday 11 November. The weather that morning was atrocious, a constant downpour but I wasn't too worried as it would be all under cover.

We were all looking forward to finding Christmas presents and the possibility of new outfits for Christmas.

After an enjoyable meal, one of our members discovered a precious ring was missing. We all retraced our steps to try to find it. Luckily, she had tried on gloves and there it was, a Christmas miracle.

Gardening Craft Group Leader:  
**Angelina Taylor** Meet 2nd Tuesdays



# Final Music Group performance well attended

40 members attended the last meeting of the music group on Friday 14 November where Win and Irene gave their last performance.

After the performance Kathryn presented Irene with a bouquet of flowers and Win with a box of chocolates and a bottle of wine to thank them for all their fabulous musical entertainment for our u3a.

Keith Bancroft formed the first group **Rave On** in 2016, just a few months after Forest Town & District u3a was established. Keith was singer and lead guitarist, Chris Robb was on bass and John Kirk on drums. That first meeting of the 60's Music Appreciation group was in the Sherwood Room at the Forest Town Arena on Friday 5 February 2016.

Sadly Keith died in March 2018, but Chris and John decided to keep the group going. Win Wall joined them in May 2016 as singer and lead guitarist with Bob Hunt on rhythm guitar.

In October 2018 it was decided to change the name of the Group to **Now or Never**. In John's own words: "After



Kathryn presents thank you gifts to Irene and Win after their final performance on Friday 14 November

much consideration it has been decided to change the name of the 60's Music Group band. 'Rave On' was chosen by the group's founder Keith who sadly passed away in March this year. 'Rave On' was very much Keith's baby and Chris and myself were more than happy to play our part in bringing his Rock & Roll vision to life".

In November 2018 Irene Brooks made her debut which extended the repertoire of the group and they moved to a larger room 'the Lounge' and later to the main hall at the Arena to accommodate the larger number of members attending the sessions.

This group played up to the outbreak of Covid. Sadly during this terrible time Chris died and John died later.

After Covid, Win formed the group **Turn Back Time** with Irene and Andy Ginever on guitar.

Due to personal and health problems within the group Win decided it was time to call it a day. Their final performance was a moving farewell with songs from the '60s. It marked the end of an era, not just for the band, but also for the devoted group of u3a members who enjoyed the nostalgic music of the '60s.



Rave on – from left: John, Chris and Keith



Now or Never – from left: Chris, Win, John, Irene and Bob



Turn Back Time – from left: Andy, Irene and Win

## Lunch Group dates and venues

Here are the proposed venues and dates for the lunch group for 2026. To contact the Group leaders please send an email through the website. [https://forest-town.u3asite.uk/u3a\\_groups/lunch-club/](https://forest-town.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/lunch-club/)

15 January 2026	Little John
19 March 2026	Widcombe Fair
16 April 2026	Ciao Bella
21 May 2026	Ego @ Old Ashfield
18 June 2026	Carnarvon Arms
16 July 2026	The Countryman

20 August 2026	Miller & Carter
17 September 2026	Burnt Stump
15 October 2026	The Lion, Farnsfield
19 November 2026	The Hostess
?? December	West Notts College



# November's rambles - blue skies but chilly

Despite the Met Office 3 day forecast suggesting our high-level walk in Derbyshire would be plagued by low cloud with very poor visibility, 11 hardy souls still signed up for our first walk in November.

Thankfully, the forecast couldn't have been more wrong as we set off on a fine day with good visibility from the National Trust Longshaw Estate, walking through woodland resplendent in autumn colours. We emerged onto Burbage Moor where we had a long steady climb under Burbage Rocks to Upper Burbage Bridge. Walking into bright sunshine caused problems as we picked our way on a very difficult path along the intriguingly named Fidler's Elbow ridge. After a steep ascent, we came out on top of Higger Tor where we sought shelter behind rocks from a very blustery wind for our lunch stop.

From there, we enjoyed extensive views all round including the Hope Valley, the Great Ridge and Kinder Scout. It clouded over for our walk back to Longshaw but there was no rain. Despite frequently hearing the bellowing of stags, disappointingly we didn't see any deer which were well camouflaged by the autumn tints.

Steven Evans led our second walk in November; 8.7 miles starting from Calton Lees car park near Chatsworth Garden Centre. The route followed that of the first ever Forest Town & District u3a ramble which took place on 18 November 2015 and was led by the group's founder, Alan Radford. Alan may no longer be with us but will always be remembered.



After walking past grazing sheep and a herd of young deer in Chatsworth Park, we stopped in Edensor village to visit the church and to view the famous graves of Kathleen Cavendish, Marchioness of Hartington (1920–1948) who was the sister of President J.F Kennedy, and Deborah Cavendish, the youngest of the Mitford sisters. Unlike her sisters, Deborah followed the path most expected of her, marrying Andrew Cavendish, second son of the Duke of Devonshire, in 1941. She died in 2014, aged 94.

We carried on to Chatworth House, which was very busy due to the Outside Christmas Market. Passing through Stand Wood we climbed the 165 steps to the Hunting Tower where we stopped for lunch. The Tower was built in the 16th century for Bess of Hardwick

and is one of only two structures at Chatsworth remaining from the time of the first house. After lunch we walked towards Beeley Hilltop Farm and on to the pretty village of Beeley before returning to our cars and well-earned refreshments at Chatsworth Garden Centre.

**Our next rambles:** 3 December: Rambling group Xmas lunch (5 miles). 17 December: Cuckney and Church Warsop (8 miles). New members welcome.



Reports by Andrew Riby and Steven Evans

Rambling Group Leader: **Andrew Riby** Rambles 7 to 9 miles. Meet 1st & 3rd Wednesdays. Contact Andrew on: 07833 543705 Email: [ribya@imcgroup.co.uk](mailto:ribya@imcgroup.co.uk)

# 10th birthday bash is a smash

Our 10th Birthday was celebrated with music and dancing at the Forest Town Arena. Our fabulous volunteer team prepared a lovely lunch. We all went home with cake and a 'goodie' bag.

A huge thank you to all who worked together to make our 10th Birthday Party such a success.

The preparations began in October with 9 social group members going to Kathryn's house to put together the key rings and put a key ring, along with chocolates into the party bags.

On the morning of the event our hardworking team laid and decorated the tables, whilst, in the kitchen, it was all systems go preparing the lunch ready for the doors opening at 11.30.

Thank you Halina for our quiz with questions and answers all relating to 2015.

We followed this with a game of Bingo and 3 lucky winners shared £140 winning the 2 games full house.

Lunch was then served and during this time our birthday cake was cut by Beryl Guest whose birthday was actually on that day. We're sure Beryl won't mind us telling you it was her 89th birthday. This was followed by our entertainment, singer Andy Sissons, who we will meet again at our Christmas Lunch at the Hostess.

All in all we hope everyone enjoyed themselves and had a good time.



in the kitchen, it was all systems go preparing the lunch ready for the doors opening at 11.30.



*Kathryn Cope & Marilyn Redfern*



## Looking back



Thanks to Pauline Marples for this picture taken at the 1st birthday celebrations of our u3a on 16 October 2016

# Sherwood Observatory - a second visit due to demand

The proposed visit to Sherwood Observatory on Tuesday 3 February at 16.00 has proved so popular that we have booked a second visit the following day – Wednesday 4 February, again at 16.00. Obviously the people on the reserve list have now secured their place but there are still 18 places available.

Come along and immerse yourself in the wonders of space with a fascinating Planetarium show. Book your place at the December General Meeting. Price: £7.50. If you are paying by cheque please make it out to Forest Town & District u3a. Please note you will need to make your own way to the Observatory.

*Kathryn Cope*



## Even more rhubarb, rhubarb!

Due to demand, a larger size coach has been secured for the visit to the Wakefield Rhubarb Festival on Friday 20 February 2026. The coach will be leaving Forest Town Arena at 0.900 and returning from the Festival at 15.30

The Festival will be in Wakefield City Centre at the heart of the rhubarb triangle. There will be a food and drinks market with over 50 chalets where you can sample and purchase local and regional delights. Stalls include everything from the finest gins, jams, pickles and cheeses, to baked goods and so much more. There will also be demonstrations where you can watch professional chefs create rhubarb masterpieces.

Please book your seat at the December General Meeting. The price for the coach is £13 each.

*Kathryn Cope*



## Theatre trips update

Tickets have been ordered for Aladdin, Westfield Folkhouse Pantomime. These will be available for collection at the December meeting.

Mansfield Operatic Society will be performing Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. If anyone would like to join us on Saturday 7 March, 14.30, tickets are priced at £20. Cheques should be made payable to M.A.O.D.S.

The Masque production of Shrek was stupendous so I have great hopes for this production.

*Ann Stanford*



## At a Glance Diary – Meetings, Events & Trips

December	December	January 2026
<b>GENERAL MEETING</b> <b>Friday 5 December 10.30</b> <b>Forest Town Arena</b> Southwell Workhouse Players	<b>CHRISTMAS LUNCH</b> <b>Thursday 18 December 12 midday</b> <b>The Hostess</b>	<b>GENERAL MEETING</b> <b>Friday 2 January 10.30</b> <b>Forest Town Arena</b> Martin Rowley The Criminal Justice system
January 2026	February 2026	February 2026
<b>FISH &amp; CHIP QUIZ</b> <b>Friday 14 January</b> <b>St Lawrence Hall</b> Price: £10	<b>SHERWOOD OBSERVATORY</b> <b>Tuesday 3 February 16.00</b> Price £7.50 Own transport	<b>SHERWOOD OBSERVATORY</b> <b>Wednesday 4 February 16.00</b> Price £7.50 Own transport
February 2026	February 2026	March 2026
<b>GENERAL MEETING</b> <b>Friday 6 February 10.30</b> <b>Forest Town Arena</b> David Price The Truth Behind the Sound of Music	<b>WAKEFIELD RHUBARB FESTIVAL</b> <b>Friday 20 February</b> <b>Wakefield City Centre</b> Price: £13 18 places left	<b>GENERAL MEETING</b> <b>Friday 6 March 10.30</b> <b>Forest Town Arena</b> James Ellison (Talk to be confirmed)

# Which interest groups will you join?

Just pick up the phone or turn up on the day



Group	When	Where	Time	Leader
Book Club	1st Mondays	Forest Town Library	10.30-12.00	Ann Stanford 01623 641864
Bus Pass Group	Various	Various	As agreed	Christine Cawthorne 01623 658171
Card Craft	4th Mondays	Sherwood Centre	10.00-12.00	Sue Buchanan 07957 656514
Computers & IT	Any time	Member's home	By arrangement	Robert Hunt 07588 047885
Country Dancing	2nd Tuesdays	Flint Avenue Centre	14.00-16.00	Ann Stanford 01623 641864
Cryptic Crosswords	4th Thursdays	Sherwood Centre	10.00-12.00	Kay Toy 01623 652245
Current Affairs	2nd Wednesdays	Flint Avenue Centre	10.00-12.00	Michael King 01623 470929
Days Out & Holidays	Advertised at general meetings	Forest Town Arena	10.30 start	Angelina Taylor 01623 622871
Evening Dinner Out	4th Thursdays	Various	18.30	Marilyn Redfern 01623 845731
Garden Crafts	2nd Tuesdays	Sherwood Centre	10.00-12.00	Angelina Taylor 01623 622871
Litter Pick	4th Tuesdays	Meet at Forest Town Arena	10.00	Susan Wright 01623 635120
Luncheon Club	Various	Various	Lunchtime	Jan Kerr and Olive Moore Contact via <a href="https://forest-town.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/lunch-club/">https://forest-town.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/lunch-club/</a>
National Trust	Various	Meet at Forest Town Arena	Various	TBA
Painting & Drawing	SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE Sherwood u3a have extended an invitation to join them. Contact Marilyn Redfern for details 07928 781706			
Photography	2nd Tuesdays	Sherwood Centre	14.00-16.00	Arthur Williams 07702 087854
Rambling 7-9 miles	1st & 3rd Wednesdays	Various	Various	Andy Riby 07833 543705
Short walks	Various	Various	10.00 start	See Group display at meetings
Table Tennis	1st & 3rd Tuesdays	Oak Tree Centre	10.30-12.30	Marilyn Redfern 01623 845731
Tabletop Games	4th Mondays	Flint Avenue Centre	14.00-16.00	Alan Kelly 07787 823778
Trace Your Family Tree	3rd Tuesdays	Flint Avenue Centre	14.00-16.00	Andrew & Julie Rowbottom 01623 636223
Young Lads' Breakfast Club	Last Tuesdays	various	10.00	Kevin Cope 07902 579299
Vintage Voices	2nd Fridays	Big Barn Lane Methodist Church	12.30-14.00	Marilyn Redfern 01623 845731

All members are invited to General Meetings – first Friday in the month at Forest Town Arena 10.00 for 10.30 start.

For latest news visit: <https://forest-town.u3asite.uk/> Forest Town & District u3a is a Registered Charity Number 1186417

# Your Committee Contacts

Forest Town & District u3a relies on the hard work of its Executive Committee. Everyone gives their time freely. All Committee members can be contacted via the website at <https://forest-town.u3asite.uk/contact/>



Our Chairperson is Kathryn Cope. Her role is to chair the monthly meetings and our committee meetings. She also represents Forest Town & District u3a to other u3as, the local area Network, the Region and the National u3a and provides leadership to ensure the committee fulfils its responsibilities.



The Vice chairperson is Arthur Williams. Arthur deputises where necessary for the chairperson in any of the chairperson's duties and provides an alternative source of motivation to the committee and the whole of Forest Town & District u3a.



Our Business Secretary is Mary Hind. Mary keeps us legal and in order, looking after all the Committee meeting arrangements and submitting reports and returns to bodies such as the National u3a office and the Charity Commission.



A lot of 'behind the scenes' activities!

The Treasurer, Sue Robinson (first right) and Assistant Treasurer, Jenny Vernalls, have oversight of our finances and the production of our Accounts.



They deal with our monetary income, membership subscriptions etc. and make payments for those groups who organise visits, experiences and trips for their members.

The Membership Secretary, Hilary Bramwell (first right) and Assistant Membership Secretary, Halina Gaskell, maintain our membership records, deal with



queries about membership and enrol new members. Remember to tell them if you move or change your email address or phone number.

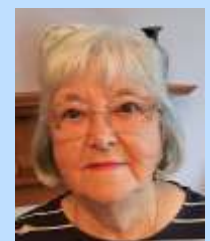
They also submit a current list of members at the appropriate time to the organisation that distributes your *u3a Matters* magazine.

The Groups Co-ordinator, Marilyn Redfern (1st right) & Assistant Groups Co-ordinator, Sue Buchanan, support our group leaders. They are the 'go to' people for



information and advice about interest groups. They help to set up new groups and deal with room and venue bookings for groups.

Welfare Officer, Angelina Taylor, liaises with group leaders and other members to identify individual members who might like some moral support.



She will purchase and send cards, as is felt appropriate, and keep Committee Members informed as and when it is necessary.

If you have any concerns then please call her on 01623 622871.

Bob Hunt is the Website Editor, email: [webftu3a@gmail.com](mailto:webftu3a@gmail.com)

For latest news visit: <https://forest-town.u3asite.uk/>

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