

Happy New Year



I know it's February but this is our first newsletter of 2026 so may I start by saying Happy New Year to all our members. Let us hope it is a good and healthy one.

When looking in my garden and seeing the snowdrops showing their white bells it always says to me, although it is still winter, spring is just around the corner.

Let us all look forward to the changing seasons with the happiness and friendship that we find being members of our u3a

Kathryn Cope

Membership renewals get underway

We will be starting to take membership renewals at the February meeting with further opportunity to renew at the March and April meetings. The annual fee for Individual membership is £20. Associate membership, for those who are already members of another u3a, is £16.

There is a Renewal Form to complete before you can pay your subscription. A copy is attached to the email accompanying this Newsletter. If you are unable to complete this form online there will be forms available at the General Meeting for you to collect and fill in

Ways to pay:

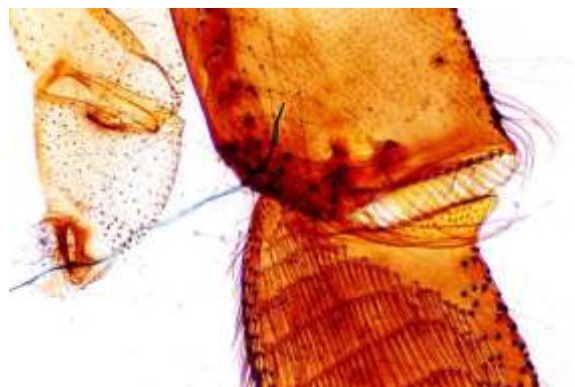
- ◆ Contactless Payment with your Bank/Credit Card;
- ◆ Cheque, payable to Forest Town & District u3a;
- ◆ Bank Transfer, Sort code: 30-90-89 Account number: 53978960. Please put your membership number in the reference box.

Guess what?

Bob Hunt took this photo and posted it on our Facebook page.

Does anyone who hasn't looked at Facebook know what it is of?

The answer is revealed on page 6



Making history entertaining



The speaker at the February General Meeting – Friday 6 February, 10.30 at Forest Town Arena is David Price.

David specialises in historical talks using musicals or works of art to illustrate historical topics. His aim is to make the audience forget their dry-as-dust history lessons at school and instead make history entertaining!

His topic for our February meeting is: *The Truth Behind the Sound of Music*. The musical is set in Salzburg, Austria, at the time of the Anschluss with Nazi Germany. It is essentially a love story. A postulant from the local convent is sent to be a governess to the seven children of Captain Georg von Trapp. Maria and Georg fall in love and eventually have to cross the mountains to Switzerland to flee the Nazis.

But how much of this was true?

Next issue is March 2026

Please send articles or ideas for the March issue to Helen Riby by email: ftu3anews@gmail.com or by post to: 5 Fal Paddock, Mansfield Woodhouse NG19 9RW by midday on Monday 23 February 2026

Photographers look to the stars



Members of January's photography group enjoying a tea break after we had just had a very interesting talk and demonstration by Arthur on photography and astronomy.

Very few of us would be able to combine the two or, for that matter, even have the equipment to try (definitely not with the camera on my mobile phone).

In total contrast I took along the camera I had when I was 11 (just a few years ago). I also brought a photograph of an early Photographer's Studio taken at the Ryedale Folk Museum, Hutton-le-Hole, North Yorkshire, which showed how studio photos were once taken.



The group meets on the second Tuesday of each month at the Sherwood Centre on Stuart Avenue, Forest Town, from 2pm till 4pm. However, there may be occasions when the group have a visit to a place of photographic interest so do check first.

Report by: **Pauline Marples**
Photo Group Leader: **Arthur Williams**
Meet 2nd Tuesdays

Country dancers' Christmas fuddle

What a wonderful country dancing fuddle we had. We did decide to eat first and dance later. Unfortunately there was not much time for dancing!!!!

Now back in January we have had our first session of the year and are starting to practise for a u3a community event later on in the year. The next country dancing meeting will be Tuesday 9 February, 2-4pm, at Flint Avenue. Dancing with drinking tea, eating biscuits and chatting included!!!



Short walkers

We would like to put a programme together starting February. The walks will be led by different members. The day, time and place will be set by the walk leader to suit their availability. Please let me know if you have a walk you can share so that it can be timetabled.

Marilyn Redfern
07928 781706



Post it please

Forest Town & District u3a is on Facebook, so please help promote your u3a by posting comments and pictures of your u3a activities.

<https://www.facebook.com/foresttownu3a>



Country Dancing Group Leader:
Ann Stanford Meet 2nd Tuesdays

Family history group have lots to discuss

The family history group met on 20 January at Flint Avenue where, we welcomed a new member, Linda. When she told us her research was in Norfolk, Julie and Andy's ears pricked up as their research is also in Norfolk. They were soon sharing information about the benefits of joining the Norfolk Family History Society.

There was plenty for everyone to chat about as we had not met for two months.

Alan shared the little booklet he and Isabel had had reprinted. It's about one of Isabel's ancestors. Alan told us how it had all come about, where it had taken them and the people they had met.

Discussions were also had on the benefits (or not) of joining online research sites such as *Find My Past* and *Ancestry* and, if you develop a family tree on one of these sites, should it be private or open to anyone?

There was an awareness that people using such sites often copy things and imply it is their own research without checking what they have seen and then end up following the wrong family.

Personally, while I do find online sites helpful, I prefer to draw up my own family tree(s) and keep them in a ring binder. That way you can pick up your folder any time and look at what information you have and what you would still like to find out, without having to boot up your PC.

We were able to advise Kath where she might find local baptisms for her own sisters and brothers. This seemed easy until it was realised that they would have been in a Methodist Church and may not be so easy to find. We will continue to pursue that one for her. This is the beauty of our group - we all try to help each other.



Report by **Pauline Marples**

Trace Your Family Tree Group Leaders:

Andrew & Julie Rowbottom Meet 3rd Tuesdays

Ornamental dragonflies keep garden crafters busy

We had a very busy morning on 13 January, as you can see from the pictures.

A dragonfly made from beads was our aim. Measuring and cutting our wire and counting out various coloured beads were the first tasks. Step by step we each made a dragonfly.

We certainly used our imagination and they all looked great.



Gardening Craft Group Leader:

Angelina Taylor

Meet 2nd Tuesdays

Card crafters making progress



Two fine examples of how our card craft group members are progressing.

These two are good enough to please even the fussiest of recipients.

Report and photo by Marilyn Redfern

Card Craft Group Leader:

Sue Buchanan 07957 656514

Meet 4th Mondays

Tricky going in December

It was a good turnout for our first outing in December, as 16 of us set out on a grey and misty morning from The Countryman car park in Bentinck Town.

This was the venue of our group's annual Christmas lunch but first, as is tradition, we had a shorter than usual walk to whet our appetites. For a while, Martyn led us alongside the River Erewash which was in spate after recent rainfall, its bank rather slippery and muddy.

Conversation was difficult as we approached Junction 28 of the noisy M1 motorway, but we soon turned away heading uphill from the river. Walking conditions continued to be tricky, so it was a relief to follow the track of a disused railway line for a while. When the mist cleared, the climax of the walk was a muddy climb up Boar Hill, which afforded views far over the industrial estates around Pinxton to the hills of the Peak District, before we descended back to The Countryman for our well-earned meal.

We set out from Cuckney in our final walk for 2025 on a cold, overcast morning following the meandering Robin Hood Way. A long stretch of road walking towards Carburton brought us to the memorial of Lord George Bentinck, a prominent politician brought up at Welbeck, who died nearby in 1848 while walking from Welbeck to Thoresby.

From there we took a pleasant forest track to Hazel Gap, passing by a couple of large solar farms, though their output must have been minimal that day, then on to Gleadthorpe Grange, the site of an agricultural research station.

The weather took a turn for the worse as we took our lunch break by the church in Church Warsop. We took whatever limited cover was available from the rain and the biting cold wind, some using a bus shelter, others huddled under yew trees. We didn't linger and completed the walk at a fast pace



Rambling Group Leader: **Andrew Riby** See page 5 to contact

Lunch club at West Notts Tech

The Lunch Group sampled the fare at West Notts Tech on 15 January. The verdict – a really lovely lunch!



Luncheon Club Group Leaders: **Jan Kerr and Olive Moore**

Following the Trent

Our outing on 7 January 2026, unusually, was a linear walk from Nottingham railway station to the Attenborough nature reserve.

We set off along the Nottingham canal and reached the River Trent by Trent Bridge. Remarkably there has been a bridge here since the year 920. The first mile or so after the bridge was along the Victoria Embankment, passing by the impressive Memorial Arch, which was built in commemoration of the fallen of two world wars.

The track became remarkably icy and treacherous as we passed underneath Clifton Bridge, hardly surprising given the severe wind chill we were experiencing.

Accordingly, we didn't linger long over our lunch stop at Beeston Lock. A look round the Canalside Heritage Centre there provided a welcome but brief respite from the cold. We ventured through the Attenborough Nature Reserve in full sunshine, enjoying the reflections in the ponds on the way and especially the warmth of the visitor centre cafe.

Our next rambles: 4 February: Teversal Country Park trails & Hardwick Hall (8 miles). 18 February: Baslow, Cundy Graves and Froggatt (8 miles). **New members welcome.**

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



Rambling Group holiday to Llandudno

Most of our regular Forest Town & District rambling group joined members of Ashfield and Hucknall u3as on the Ashfield-organised, regular January walking holiday. This year our destination was Llandudno from 16–20 January. The slight concern we had about the weather in North Wales in January proved completely unfounded. We basked in glorious sunshine for most of the time, with just one morning being overcast and not a drop of rain!

There was a choice between a long and a short walk on the Saturday and Monday with an optional coach outing to Betws y Coed and Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogoch (meaning: *St Mary's Church in the hollow near a rapid whirlpool and the Church of St. Tysilio of the red cave*) on Anglesey on the Sunday.

Saturday's long walk took us round the Great Orme on Marine Drive and along the estuary to Conwy. In perfect sunny weather we marvelled at the mill-pond-like sea, the wild Kashmiri goats clinging to the hillside and at the many seals spotted along the coastline.



Monday's long walk took us up high along the flanks of Conwy Mountain to the Sychnant pass. Whilst there had been a sharp frost and the paths in the shade were icy, we all needed to lose a layer or two as we climbed in the sunshine.

The short walk alternatives were to the Haulfre Gardens and Llandudno's West Shore on the Saturday with a circuit of the Little Orme on Monday.



Huge thanks to Ashfield's Carol Green for organising. Everyone had a fabulous time.

Helen Riby

Cairngorm holiday in March: twin available

Due to a cancellation a twin room has become available on the Scottish Highlands Holiday, Sunday 15 March to Thursday 19 March. Price: £249.00 per person.

Staying at the Duke of Gordon Hotel in the Cairngorms, the holiday includes half board with one Ceilidh evening. The itinerary includes the famous Road to the Isle's train ride from Fort William to Mallaig, the Ben Nevis Gondola, the Red Deer Centre and Pitlochry village plus free time in Kingussie.

If you are interested please phone Kathryn Cope on 07711 128897



Fish & chips quiz

Seventy-four members took part in our annual quiz with Sue's Fish Bar once again providing piping hot fish and chips for our lunch. I must say Sue has the cooking down to a fine art to provide us with such delicious food. Kevin and Alan were kept busy going backwards and forwards ferrying the food over to us.

There were seven rounds of topical questions on the tables, alongside Dingbats, a picture quiz, a mini crossword and a word ladder to try and complete during the afternoon.

Kath Barnfarther and Marcia Brodjinski won overall and were presented with a tub of Heroes.

A jolly good afternoon was spent eating fish & chips, drinking tea, eating choccy biscuits and using the old brain' all whilst meeting new people.

Kathryn Cope

Lost at the fish & chips quiz

One of our members took part in the Fish & Chip Quiz using her brand new slimline gold coloured Radley pen and somehow forgot to pick it up. It was a Christmas gift from her grandson. She's hoping that someone else picked it up and if so please could you call or message Jen on 07855 433760. Thank you.

Charity ukulele fund-raiser

For our next Charity fund-raising event, Dukeries u3a's Jubilee Ukulele Group has organised a Ukulele Jamboree. It's on Thursday 19 March 10.00 till 15.00 at the John Fretwell Complex, Mansfield.

Any ukulele enthusiast is welcome to join us for this FUN DAY OUT. Free tea and coffee all day and a play-along book included. Proceeds will be donated to the John Eastwood Hospice and John Fretwell Complex. Admission £10 by ticket only.

Contact Linda Bond, email:

jjplayalong@gmail.com to request tickets.

Thurs 19th March 2026

The JUG's Jamboree

Raffle prizes

Hat band

Ukulele play along

Open mic

Beginners to advanced

Tickets £10 - to include:

- Free tea/coffee all day
- Song book with chords
- Meeting like-minded people
- Bring your own food

Address: The John Fretwell Complex, Soakholme Rd, Mansfield NG19 5LL

For a great ukulele day out, contact Linda Bond
email: JJPlayalong@gmail.com

All proceeds from this event will be for
The John Eastwood Hospice and The John Fretwell Complex

Opt in and have a go

My term as Group Co-ordinator ends this April and we need someone to take up the challenge and take over the role.

All it requires is commitment and enthusiasm to help promote new groups and support existing ones. This hasn't been an onerous task as the groups are self-governing on the whole.

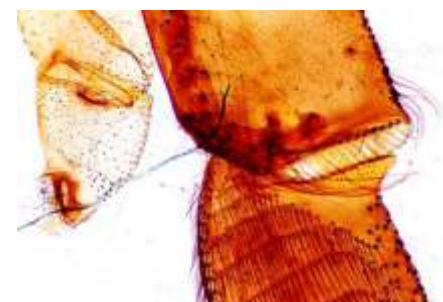
If you want to discuss what it involves feel free to message me before making a commitment. It really isn't difficult.

Marilyn Redfern

It's the bee's knees!

Well did you guess what Bob Hunt had photographed? I suspect very few if any of you got it right, - unless you cheated by looking at the Facebook page!

This amazing photo is of a honey bee's knee - taken through a microscope. Fabulous Bob. It's a great picture.





Silver Screen at Forest Town Arena

Date: **Friday 19 April**

Time: **11.00 to 13.00**

Venue: **Forest Town Arena**

Price **£2 – pay on the door – tea, popcorn & biscuits included**

Join us for our next Silver Screening – **Next Goal Wins** – a sports comedy based on the true story of the American Samoa soccer team, infamous for their brutal 31-0 FIFA loss in 2001. With the World Cup Qualifiers approaching, the team hires down-on-his-luck, maverick coach Thomas Rongen (Michael Fassbender) hoping he will turn the world's worst soccer team around.

Angelina Taylor

Wakefield rhubarb trip - 20 March - a few spaces left



There are still a few places on the coach for the Wakefield Rhubarb festival on Friday 20 March. Price £13. Book your place at the February meeting.

The coach will be leaving the Forest Town Arena car park at 09.00 and returning from Wakefield at 15.30. If you are leaving your car in the car park for the day, can you please make sure you don't park in front of the gates that lead onto the bowling green, just in case the caretaker needs access to the gates.

Kathryn Cope

Turkey & tinsel - Christmas 2026 here we come!

I know we are all just recovering from Christmas '25 but these short breaks are popular and soon get booked up.

Our social group has reserved a four-night break in Mold on the North Wales Border for 23–27 November 2026. We will be staying at Beaufort Park Hotel if you want to check it out online.

There are single, twin and double rooms available. The singles will carry a surcharge of between £18 – £40 for the stay, dependent on how many single rooms are booked.

The cost, apart from supplements, is £409 per person. Liverpool, Chester and Llangollen are optional visits at no extra charge.

Deposits of £50 will be taken at the February meeting. No reservations can be made without a deposit.

Some ground floor rooms with step-in showers are available but carry a further surcharge of £80 for the stay.



Marilyn Redfern

At a Glance Diary – Meetings, Events & Trips

February 2026	February 2026	February 2026
SHERWOOD OBSERVATORY Tuesday 3 February 16.00 & Wednesday 4 February 16.00 Price £7.50 Own transport	GENERAL MEETING Friday 6 February 10.30 Forest Town Arena David Price The Truth Behind the Sound of Music	WAKEFIELD RHUBARB FESTIVAL Friday 20 February Wakefield City Centre Price: £13 STILL A FEW PLACES AVAILABLE
March 2026	March 2026	April 2026
GENERAL MEETING Friday 6 March 10.30 Forest Town Arena James Ellison: The Long Road to Publication	CAIRNGORM HOLIDAY Sunday 15 to Thursday 19 March Duke of Gordon Hotel, Kingussie ONE TWIN ROOM AVAILABLE due to cancellation	SILVER SCREEN Friday 17 April 11.00 Forest Town Arena Price £2.00

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	SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE			
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 https://forest-town.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/lunch-club/
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

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

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