

u3a

Mansfield and District

FEBRUARY 2026
NEWSLETTER



Pathfinders January walk

Established 1999

Registered Charity No116417



Website : [www.https://mansfield.u3asite.uk/](https://mansfield.u3asite.uk/)

Facebook: Mansfield & District u3a



Chair's Chat

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete our recent member questionnaire. The level of response was extremely encouraging and shows just how much people care about Mansfield u3a and its future.

Your feedback has given the committee a valuable insight into what is working well and where we can continue to improve. It confirmed the importance of our interest groups, the friendliness of our meetings, and the sense of connection that u3a brings to many members. It also highlighted areas where clearer communication, small practical changes, and new ideas could make an even bigger difference. You can find out a little more in this newsletter.

The committee has spent time reviewing the results together and using them to help shape our objectives and plans for the coming months. My hope that this survey is not a one-off exercise, but part of an ongoing conversation between members and volunteers.

Thank you again for sharing your views. They truly help guide the direction of our u3a. **Chris**

Questionnaire Survey – What the Results Show

The questionnaire results show exceptionally high levels of satisfaction across Mansfield u3a. An impressive 99% of respondents said they were either 'Satisfied' or 'Very Satisfied' with their overall experience, and the same figure was recorded for communication. This is a strong endorsement of the welcoming culture and commitment shown by our volunteers and group leaders.

Members also reported feeling welcome and included at meetings across all age groups, with positive responses ranging from 85% in the 80+ age group to 100% among members aged 50–59. Recommendation levels were equally strong, with between 94% and 100% of members across all age groups saying they would recommend Mansfield u3a to others.

The survey also highlighted how members access information. The Mansfield u3a website is used by 72% of respondents, while 40% use Facebook and 17% visit the national u3a website.

In terms of future activities, the strongest theme was social connection, including lunch groups, coffee mornings and opportunities to meet others. There was also strong interest in arts and crafts, learning-based groups such as science, photography and languages, technology support, and gentle exercise activities.

*I would have been interested to know what percentage of members look at the Newsletter –
Yvonne*

PATHFINDERS – LINDA KENNEDY

Dip in and Discover – Creswell Crags Walk

January saw an enjoyable outing under our *Dip in and Discover* banner. Despite chilly temperatures hovering around 2°C, we had a great turnout, including Caz, who only joined our u3a in December and has jumped straight in!

We set off on a relaxed 3.5-mile social walk from Notcutts Garden Centre, taking in the beauty of Creswell Crags and countryside views along the way.

A walk was rich in history we passed the memorial marking the site of a Canadian WWII aircraft crash, a poignant reminder of local wartime history. Creswell Crags itself is a site of outstanding historical importance, home to human occupation dating back some 60,000 years, with caves containing rare prehistoric cave art from around 12,500–14,000 years ago.

A gentle climb led us up to St Winifred's Church, approached by a beautiful lime tree-lined path. A brief stop (it was a little too cold to linger!) at the Church and the obligatory photograph.

The church is the traditional burial place of the Dukes and Duchesses of Portland and well worth the short ascent.

We finished where we started, rounding off the walk perfectly with a well-deserved coffee and a very tasty scone. A cold but rewarding walk, great company, and another successful *Dip in and Discover* event! *Photograph of group on front cover.*

NEW GROUP – INTERNATIONAL DINING GROUP LEADER : CHRISTINE SMITH

There are places available on Wednesday 25, if you wish to join us at EGO, a Mediterranean restaurant. £10 deposit can be paid at the next meeting,

If you would like to check out the menu, it is the Dine Out menu, Two courses for £17.95. 6.30 pm sitting.

The Restaurant for March is Ciao Bella and the deposit is £5.

Thank you to everyone who has already booked



February

Hello everyone and hope you are keeping well?

Greetings from a warm and sunny Australia where we're visiting our daughter and family in South Australia in the Barossa, famous of course for its wine – some of which I've had to try! Just like an English summer, the weather in Oz can be variable. We've had no rain and have experienced temperatures ranging from 22°C to 45°C, which is very hot! As always when we are away, we like to do a little travelling and last week we were in Western Australia in and around Perth where we explored Kings Park and the Botanic Gardens, which were well worth the visit.

A couple of weeks ago, I was delighted to be invited onto ABC's Talkback Gardening, South Australia's radio programme with host Deb Tribe and their gardening guru Sophie Thomson. Sophie is well known across Australia on radio and TV and she kindly invited us to visit her new garden, 1½ hours NE of Adelaide. It's an amazing project and in under a year Sophie and partner George have done a great deal of work. Despite the harsh growing conditions Sophie grows a wide range of plants, including lots of fruit and vegetables grown in self-watering beds, known as wicking beds. This is something I'm interested in learning more about so I can try it back home. We might not have summers like Australia, but we definitely need to think more about saving water and using it wisely. While visiting Sophie, we recorded a podcast about her gardening career and the development of the garden. You can find this and other gardens we visited on Pots & Trowels through February. We're due back home to Lincolnshire in early February, where the weather will definitely be much colder, but we are both looking forward to getting into the garden to start work on some new areas ready for spring planting. Also, after five weeks of air-conditioning, I'm looking forward to lighting the log burner!

Martin & Jill.

Jobs for February

Now is the perfect time to cut back herbaceous perennials to ground level to encourage strong new growth. Crowded clumps can also be lifted, divided and re-planted. Prune late summer flowering clematis, known as group 3, from mid-February by cutting all growth down to around 6"-10" from ground level. Feed and mulch and look forward to an amazing display from late July onwards. Snowdrops are at their best through February and it's a great time to get out and see them in open gardens. It's also a good time to plant from pots to help bulk up the numbers in your own garden. Although I don't dig the borders, I do work through them with a fork to loosen the surface and to pick off any weeds, before spreading a few inches of mulch or garden compost to help keep the soil in good condition. Top-dress trees, shrubs or evergreens growing in large containers by scraping off the top couple of inches of old compost, sprinkle a little slow-release fertiliser and top off with some fresh compost. Get your mower ready for action by giving it a clean and check over so that it's ready for the new mowing season.

In fact, very often I give our lawns a light trim in late February if conditions are dry. Hardy annuals can be sown in cell trays in a cold greenhouse to give you strong seedlings for planting out in April for a flush of early summer flowers. Prepare seed potatoes for spring planting by standing the tubers in trays in a light, frost-free position. Very soon new green shoots will develop from the dormant eyes, which gives them a head start when they are planted out into the garden. Prune autumn fruiting raspberries by cutting all the canes down to ground level and then apply a mulch of compost around them. If you have a heated propagator you can start to make early sowings of tomatoes, peppers and aubergines in small pots. As winter vegetables such as leeks and cabbages come to an end, start to clear the beds and prepare the ground by adding some organic matter, ready for spring sowing and planting.

For a weekly gardening fix you can watch or listen to our "Pots & Trowels" gardening videos and podcasts by visiting www.potsandtrowels.com or on YouTube.

Followers of Pots & Trowels can take advantage of the following discounts. Kings seeds offer 10% discount on seeds purchased from their web site www.kingsseeds.com by quoting the code PT2026. PlantGrow who make a range of organic mulches and compost offer 10% discount when ordering online www.plantgrow.co.uk or by calling 01953 525001 – just quote PT2026. Happy gardening

CINEMA GROUP

Five members of the Cinema Group, led by Christine Smith, met on Monday 12 January to sit back and enjoy the story of Hamnet, the son of William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway. We witnessed the blossoming of the love story between the pair, 18 year - old William and 26 year - old Anne. The film takes you on a roller coaster journey through the highs and terrible lows of their lives in 16th century England and the acting of both leading characters was amazing. Jessie Buckley gives an Oscar worthy performance as does Paul Mescal as the young bard. What a memorable film it is, and well worth an afternoon's excursion. Thank you Christine for organising it.



Jessie Buckley and Paul Mescal as Anne and William

THEATRE GROUP – JULIA HYDE

There's been a lapse since I have been able to find anything of interest as it's been and still is, Pantomime season. Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by the Operatic Society is booked for March. Aladin and Rapunzel were a great success!

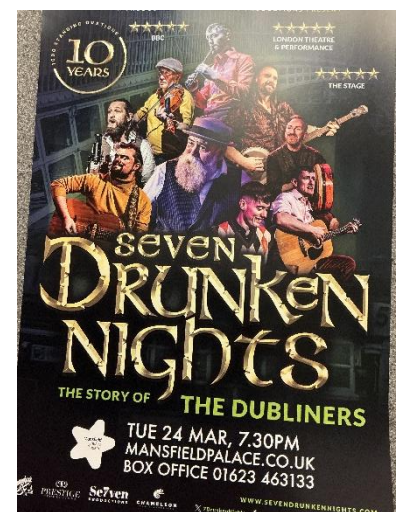
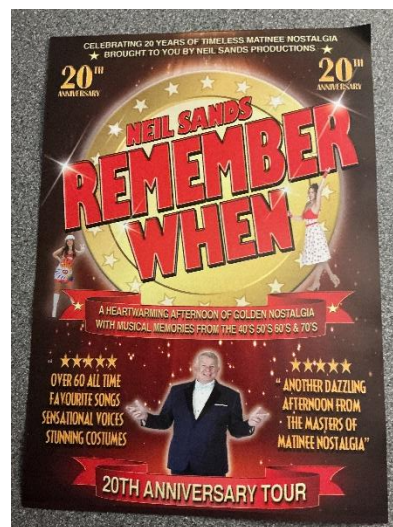
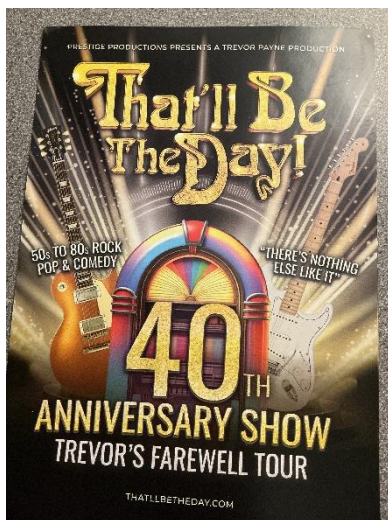
I have been to the Theatre and most shows for the near future are mostly tribute bands. I have chosen:

Celine, Thursday February 12th. £29.

Seven Drunken Nights Tuesday March 24th £30-50 p. (I think this one sounds very good!)

That'll Be The Day. (Trevor's Farewell Tour) Wednesday May 13th £31.

Hopefully there will be a lot more, if anyone looks what is on and they like, please tell me and I will do my best to accommodate. There will be lots of flyers at the meeting so please come and see me. Julia.



Alan Miller has sent a cartoon that's a bit too close to the truth.

Spotted the council inspecting potholes the other day. Apparently they're not bad enough to do anything with them yet...



Burns Night at Refined Restaurant

Twenty-six members enjoyed Burns Night at Refined. Once again, we were warmly welcomed by friendly staff who were very helpful and the service was of an excellent standard. The food was good and plentiful. Top Marks!! One thing to check. I had my cheese and biscuits boxed to take with me - when I opened them at home there were biscuits, grapes, chutney and celery. They forgot the cheese!! It made me smile. Julia Hyde



**Some hae meat and canna eat,
And some wad eat that want it;
But we hae meat and we can eat
Sae let the Lord thankit.**



NEWS OF UPCOMING SOCIAL EVENTS – IRENA DUBOWSKI

u3a QUIZ - Jacqueline Harkin and John Severn are organising the quiz at the Mansfield Bowling Club on Friday 10th April, 1-4pm. Cost of tickets is still to be determined but will include coffee/tea and cake. Tickets will go on sale at February's main meeting.

NNNG – Picnic in the Forest – The NNNG are planning a picnic this summer. More details to follow next month.

JUKE BOX JURY - We are hoping to organise a fun afternoon either in May or June with an outsider provider. More details to follow next month.

RUTLAND WATER – Excursion in last 2 weeks of August. We will look at combining a cruise on Rutland Water with a visit to either Gates Garden Centre or Rutland Nursery.

DUKERIES u3a – UKULELE GROUP

For their next Charity fund-raising event, Dukeries U3A, Jubilee Ukulele Group have organised a Ukulele Jamboree, Thursday March 19th 10.00am to 3.00 pm. at the John Fretwell Complex, Mansfield. Any ukulele enthusiast is welcome to join them for this FUN DAY OUT. Free tea and coffee all day, and play-along book included. Proceeds will be donated to the John Eastwood Hospice, and John Fretwell Complex, Mansfield. Admission £10 by ticket only. Contact Linda Bond,

e-mail:- jjplayalong@gmail.com to request tickets.



Thurs 19th March 2026

The JUG's Jamboree

Raffle prizes

Hat band

Open mic

Ukulele play along

10am-3pm

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, Sookholme Rd, Mansfield N019 8LL

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

JANUARY SPEAKER : NIGEL LOWEY

St. Pancras was a 14-year-old Christian boy in Rome. In Britain he is better known as a railway station!

On 20th January Nigel Lowey from Nottingham gave a well-received talk about the history of St. Pancras station. But the talk wasn't about trains. It



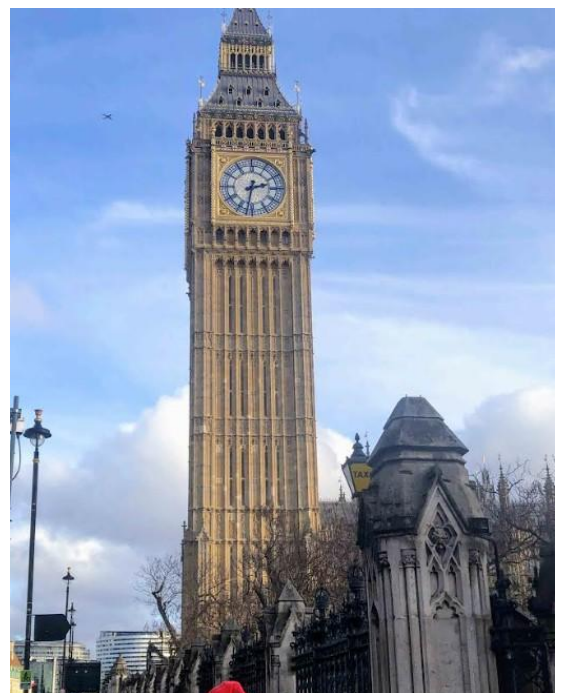
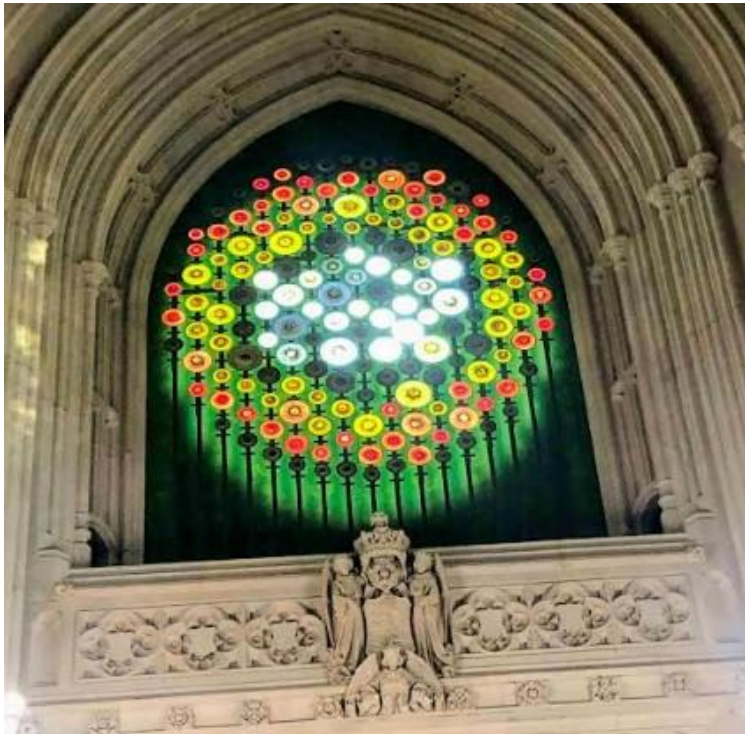
was about history, elegant engineering, world-class architecture, and a great background story about how the rivalry between Victorian companies led to the impressive buildings. And all of the building materials came from the Midlands - including Mansfield red sandstone pillars. There were also links to author Thomas Hardy, writer John Betjeman, beer from Burton-on-Trent, The Spice Girls, and Batman! The talk included many photos of how the neglected building underwent a breathtaking transformation. A list of books about the building is at <http://lowey.co.uk/stp/>



CURRENT AFFAIRS – GRAHAM HEADWORTH

TRIP TO HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

Nine members of the Current Affairs Group visited Westminster on January 16th to visit the Home of our Democracy, the Houses of Parliament. All of the arrangements were by Steve Yemm our MP. Our trip was via a "swish" coach which deposited us after three and a half hours outside the Houses of Parliament. After an airport type of security inspection and a quick snack in the House Café we began an amazingly informative visit with insights (and secrets!) given to us by our Guide who was a mine of history and gossip. Highlights ranged from a statue of the Iron Lady looking sternly with an accusing finger at our Current Affairs group's convenor in the Central Lobby (he gave her an appropriate salute) to watching from the Strangers Gallery in the Lords who were discussing the End of Life Bill and at least one member sitting on Commons the bench behind where the PM sits, despite the risk of a Security Officer apprehending him. Oh yes, the reference to security includes dozens of armed Police Officers in the Lobbies! Must have heard what a bunch of Mansfield subversives were in the vicinity. A GREAT DAY OUT but back home by 10.0pm



Photos of window in Westminster Hall to the Chambers it changes colours with the tides of the Thames. The Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben) turrets painted gold and hands in glorious bright blue. Plaque all thanks to Sheila Pegg and Ron Tansley

Solo Dining Sunday Lunch & Evening Meal – Sheila Pegg

The Solo Diners enjoyed roast dinners at The Redgate for our January meal. This is one of our favourite places where we are looked after very well and served delicious meals.

Solo Dining Evening Meal

Due to the New Year Bank Holiday, we did not have an evening meal in January but are looking forward to our February meeting.



Home - Made Easter Treats – Marilyn Jones

We are currently planning our Home - Made Easter Treats consisting of fudge, truffles, fun or personalised chocolate lollipops and Jam/Chutney sessions. The early jam sessions will use up some lovely frozen Summer Fruits and later ones maybe held in the Summer will use up fresh fruits.

For those of you who are interested in attending, please contact Marilyn Jones on 0780 3244841 or marilyn.jones1947@gmail.com. The sessions will be limited to four members at a time in Marilyn's kitchen.



FEBRUARY'S MEETING - Looking forward to seeing Paul Lillie at our February 17 Meeting. This is one of his paintings. A very talented artist by the looks of things.

(Love Elvis)



Bridge – Sheila Pegg

We had two enjoyable bridge evenings in January and welcomed two members who rejoined after a long break. Mansfield members are joined by members from Ashfield u3a.



The next dates will be 16 February, 2 March and 16 March.

Message from the Editor

Having made more room in the Newsletter by reducing the amount of space taken up by Group Information (all relevant information is still on here by the way) we will now have room for feature articles. I would love to hear your stories. How and when you first became a member, what you did before becoming a member. Has it changed your life? If so, how has it changed? Do you have interesting stories about the history of where you live? In other words, I will be pleased to receive any stories that might be of interest. What are you good at? Are you celebrating a special event in your lives? Even the odd love story would cheer us all up. Please put on your thinking caps and let me have your articles. Finally I would be very interested to know what you would like to see more of in the Newsletter and what you wouldn't mind seeing less of!!

Yvonne at newsletter.editoru3a@gmail.com.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Your Monthly Planner 2025

Day / Week	Week One	Week Two	Week Three	Week Four
Monday	Tai Chi 10.30 Bridge 18:30	Tai Chi 10.30 Writing for pleasure 14.00 Scrabble 14.00	Tai Chi 10.30 Crafty Chat 14.00 Bridge 18.30	Tai Chi 10.30 Classical Music 14.00
Tuesday	Gardening 10.00 Soft Tennis 14.00	Antiques & Collectables 10.00 Soft Tennis 14.00 International Dining	U3a Monthly Meeting 10.00 Soft Tennis 14.00	Family History 10.00 Card Crafting 13.00 (or the last Tuesday) Soft Tennis 14.00 International Dining Popular Music 14.00 Wine Appreciation two 19.30
Wednesday	Beadwork 10.00 Watercolour painting 14.00	Beadwork 10.00 Strollers 10.30 (except December) Calligraphy 13.00	Beadwork 10.00 History 10.00 Wine appreciation one 18.30	Beadwork 10.00 Calligraphy 13.00
Thursday	Solo Dining, evening Bowling 13.00	Bowling 13.00	Reading Group 13.30 Bowling 13,00	Pathfinders 10.30 (or the last Thursday) Bowling 13.00 Shufflers 12 noon
Friday	Current Affairs 10.00	Read a little aloud 14.00		
Saturday				
Sunday			Solo Dining, lunch	

Additional Information

Family History - excluding August and December

Gardening – March to December, excluding August
Mansfield Theatre – Dates and times vary, see website for details

Tai Chi – excluding Christmas and New Year and instructor’s holidays

GROUP DETAILS

GROUP	LEADER	CONTACT	WHEN	WHERE
Antiques & Collectables	Patricia Blackwell	01623 481745	Second Tues 10-12 noon	St Peter’s Centre
Beadwork	Marilyn Jones	07803 244841	Each Wednesday 10-12 noon	Hilcote
Bowls	David Drew	07960 385537	Thursdays	Lammas Sports Centre
Bridge	Sheila Pegg	07883 720657	First & Third Mondays	Rushley Inn 6.30-9 pm
Calligraphy	Marilyn Jones	07803 244841	Second & Fourth Wednesday	Hilcote 1 -3 pm
Card Crafting	Jill West	07554 012769	Last Tues in month 1 – 3pm	Friends’ Meeting House
Cinema Group	Christine Smith	07859 249086	Every Monday	Odeon Cinema
Classical Music	Michael Allen	01623 653345 07565 936859	Fourth Monday 2-4pm	Leader’s Home
Crafty Chat	Stephen Hall	07940 460250	Third Tues 2-4pm (Term Time only)	Friends’ Meeting House
Current Affairs	Graham Headworth	01623 468883	First Friday 10 – 12 noon	Mansfield Bowling Club
Family History	Valerie Wood Ken Gilbert	v.a.l.woody11@gmail.com	Fourth Tues 10-12 noon	Members’ houses
Gardening	Marilyn Dibble	01623 634805	First Tuesday 10 – 12 noon	St Peter’s Centre
History	Philip Tucker	01623 437516	Third Wed 10 – 12 noon	Mansfield Bowling Club
International Dining	Christine Smith	07859 249086	Second and Last Wednesday of month	Various restaurants.

Mansfield Palace Theatre	Julia Hyde	0792 414101	Details of shows will be Advertised on Website & Meeting	Mansfield Palace
Pathfinders Walking	Linda Kennedy	07543 293814	Last Thursday In month 10.30 am	Various locations
Popular Music	Elizabeth Ellis	01623 644429	Fourth Tues 2 – 4 pm	Members' Homes
Read a Little Aloud	Sue Howlett	01623 627423	Second Friday 2 – 4 pm	Members' Homes
Reading Group	Peter Dawson	07475 713368	Third Thursday 1.30 to 3.30pm	Group Leader's home Farnsfield
Scrabble	Lynne Payne	07954 463384	Second Monday 2 – 4 pm	Group Leader's home
Shufflers	Sylvia Newlyn & Ian Lakin	01623 655893 07989 668275	Fourth Thursday	Various
Science & Technology	David Drew	07960 385537	Fourth Friday	Mansfield Bowling Club
Soft Tennis	Christine Smith	07859 249086	Weekly on Tues 2 – 3pm	Oak Tree Leisure Centre
Solo Dining	Sheila Pegg	07883 720657	First Thursday Evenings times vary	Various Venues
Solo Dining Sunday Lunch	Sheila Pegg	07883 720657	Third Sunday	Various Venues
Strollers	Sue Howlett Valerie Hart Ian Lakin	01623 627423 07745 208248 07989 668275	Second Wed 10.30 am	Various Venues
Tai Chi	Lorna Pye	07712 029262 01623 636060	Mon 10.30 – 11.30 am	Bethal Chapel, Nottm Rd
Wine Appreciation	Michael Allen	01623 653345 07565 936859	Third Wed 7.30 pm	Members' Homes
Wine Appreciation Group 2	Graham Allin	01623 474662	Fourth Tuesday 7.30 pm	

Writing for Pleasure	Hilary Miller Susan Ford	01623 620067 01623 844 286	Second Mon 2 – 4 pm	Friends' Meeting House
Holidays and Outings	Denise Whitsed Liz Wilson	07791 941502 07837 710386	Denise & Liz are members of Sherwood u3a	They come to our meetings To share details of their trips and holidays.

IMPORTANT NOTICES - First of all, here's hoping everyone is keeping safe and well. If anyone is struggling or needing any help in any way, please don't hesitate to let any of the Committee know. We will do our best to help in any way.

Subscription costs for the current year will be £18 and £14 for Associate Members. Cheques payable to Mansfield & District u3a. Online payments can be made. Contact the Treasurer, Gill Mallinder for bank details. Membership forms can be downloaded from the finance page on the Website. All current members must fill in all sections to comply with data protection laws when paying their subscriptions which are due in August.

Events and Visit payments. Members are reminded that deposits and payments for events and visits organized by Mansfield u3a and its groups are non-refundable, but places may be offered to others.

Changes of address etc. Please let Jean Hatton, Membership Secretary know to keep our records up to date.

If you have any health issues that you think may affect your participation in, or enjoyment of, the activities of Mansfield u3a, you might wish to disclose them voluntarily to the Group Leaders of the groups you join, should it be helpful to do so. **Please have your "in case of emergency" card with you at all times.** If you do not have one, please obtain one at the next Members' meeting.

If you are concerned about accessing one of our venues, please talk to our Accessibility contact, Linda Kennedy **07543 293814**

If you have any concerns about another member who seems to be vulnerable, and you think they might be being taken advantage of by someone, you should tell our Safeguarding contact, Irena Dubowski (07549 409262) or one of the Committee.

Should you not wish to be included in any photographs taken whilst members are engaged in any activity, please let the photographer know as otherwise we will assume your consent has been given

Disclaimer - The views expressed here are those of the contributors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor, the Committee of Mansfield & District u3a or the Third Age Trust. Nor can any responsibility be accepted for members' announcements or any errors that may occur.