

Newsletter December 2024

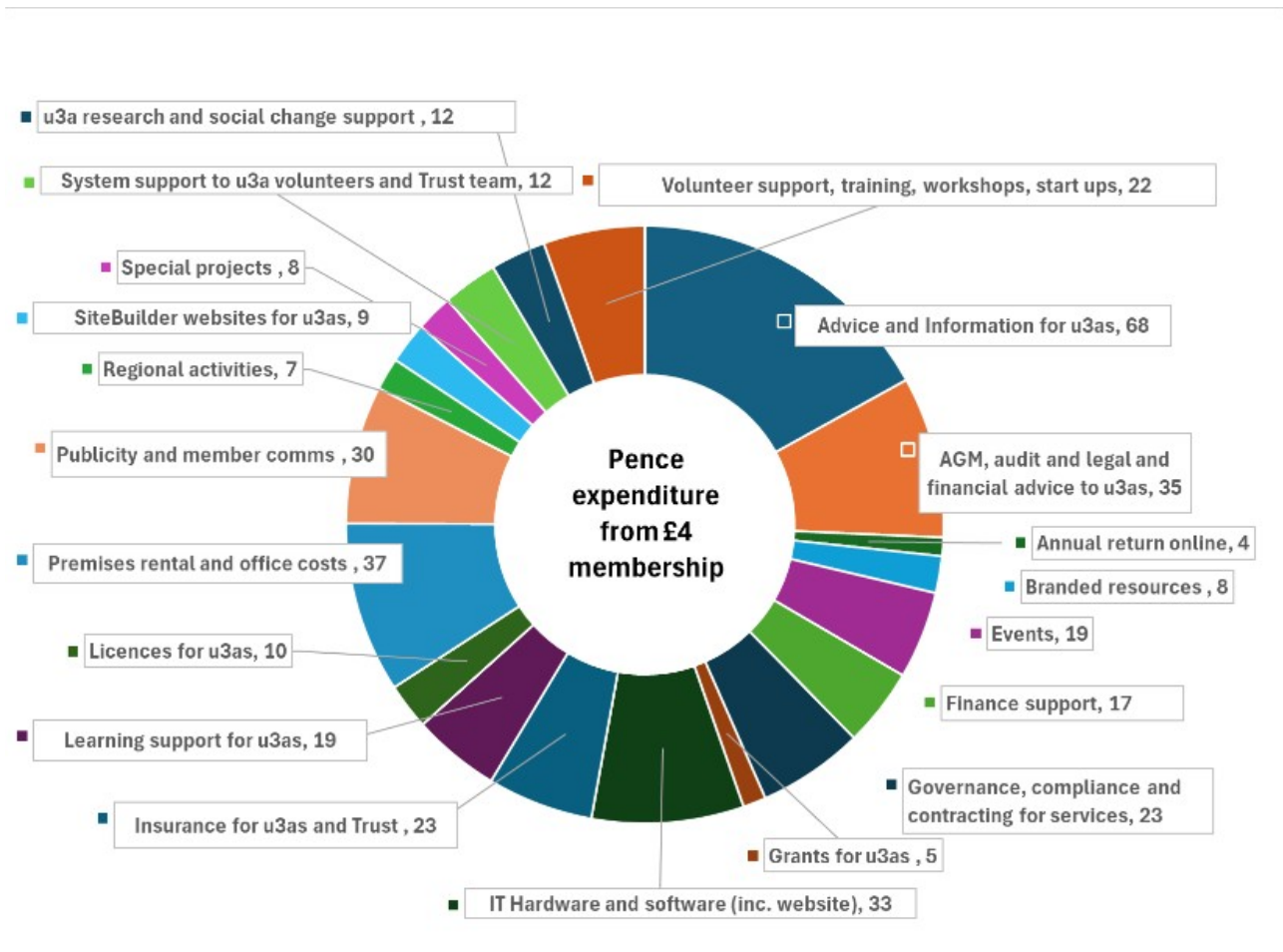
## COMMITTEE

June Keeler Chair	Trevor Pitt Treasurer
Speaker Secretary	Andy Downs Groups Coordinator
Sue Mellish Membership Secretary	Sheila Simms Minutes Secretary

### Chair's report

Welcome to December's newsletter.

A few months ago I promised that I would research into how your membership fees are used. This pie chart shows the following information; Interesting isn't it?



In the next few days you will be able to see a new look to our website. Every branch of u3a has had to comply with a new platform from which to run their website. Hundreds of hours training later our very own website manager, James Lundie has finally completed this huge task. So when you see him next time, please give him a pat on the back and if you see him in the pub then buy him a drink. Oh, and send him photos of your u3a activities.

I think I mentioned this in an earlier newsletter... it's our 10th anniversary next year. How would you like to celebrate it? The committee have started the discussion but we need your ideas so please let your convenor know and they can email Andy Downs group coordinator as soon as possible. One idea is Leyburn u3a Got Talent show and another one is an Auction of Promises where members donate a skill or their time to show the bidder how to do something. There's a lot of talent within our u3a. The money then raised could support the maintenance of a bench in Leyburn for us all to sit on after a hectic morning's shopping! Or something else entirely.

Last week at TOSH a member of u3a took the wrong coat home by mistake. If you did too could you return it to TOSH please.

A note on membership fees... from January 1st until the end of March fees will be reduced to £5 single and £10 a couple. A January sale in fact.

And finally, it's nearly time for our Christmas social on Friday 20th at the usual time of 10.00 for 10.30. As well as mincepies we also have a short presentation about the history of u3a by our very own Bob Hill. If you don't know Bob then I can tell you he has been leading the Spanish for beginners courses in the last 18 months. He assures me it will be in English.

If I don't see you then, on behalf of your committee I wish you a Happy Christmas and an exciting 2025!

June

## Monthly Meeting

### u3a everywhere

You are welcome to join us for mince pies and coffee on **Friday 20 December** and to discover how the global organisation that is now the u3a came about.

In *u3a here, there and everywhere* **Bob Hill** will explain how u3a began and developed into a world wide movement. Bob is currently convenor of our Spanish Beginners group and was a u3a chair whilst living in Spain. Doors open at 10.00 for 10.30 at Leyburn Arts and Community Centre, Richmond Road, Leyburn DL8 5DL.

Visitors and new members are always welcome. Annual membership is £12 or £20 for two people at the same address, For details contact Sue Mellish via Website

## November Speaker Report

Community Shed Part 2 - Julian Pinches

A very well-attended and enthusiastic audience listened to one of the chief organisers update us with the latest news of this new venture. For those who missed the first presentation and wondering what all the excitement is about, if you look behind the TOSH building in Leyburn you can now see the soon-to-be opened Community shed!

What was originally 3 second-hand storage containers has been transformed into a wonderful venue. Jeannie Bishop's idea to enter a competition to win some Pacer trains going cheap in 2019 developed into acquiring more suitable resources which could be

easily transported to the Leyburn site. A lot of time and effort has been spent insulating it inside and weather-proofing on the outside to provide round-the-year usage.

We enjoyed the photos of the equipment that is already in-situ. For example, a new Wood lathe and an older one which can be used for lessons in woodturning, 3 drills of various sizes, a Bobbin Sander for shaping, a big saw which has a dust extractor, a brand new table saw and re-chargeable battery powered drills and sanders to name just a few. Also shown was the inside of the shed and how it is organised. For example, a Handtools Organiser to help users see what is available, a very long workbench on lockable wheels with pigeon-holes underneath to leave tools in and of course a kettle to encourage the social aspect of the shed.

The shed is further divided into clean and not so clean areas. A clean room provides smaller tools, drills, table saws for model-making, a grinder, 2 Dremels for carving and piercing and a Pyrography kit. A computer corner to research ideas online for designing and also books. Soldering irons to make jewellery and sewing machines to make textiles are also available. Investment has also been made to protect this venue using CCTV.

The annual fee to join is £30 and £2 each time you visit. Further information can be found at [leyburncommunityshed@gmail.com](mailto:leyburncommunityshed@gmail.com) For a small membership subscription this shed offers a big opportunity!

## **Garden Group November meeting**

We met at my house - instead of West Witton's Village Hall as it was more cosy and easier to access indoor plants tea and cake!

The theme of the meeting was Indoor Plants when we pooled our ideas of how to look after different plants, how to keep them going - some people had plants that were many years old and still going strong. We agreed that most indoor plants thrive on neglect, not too much water but feeding occasionally! Put them in your shower cubic when you go on holiday and they will thrive! Rose showed us how she got Amaryllis bulb to continue to flower year after year and also to produce new bulbs. Dayle told us about the Clivia plant which eventually produces beautiful bright orange flowers but does need dusting regularly!

It was an interesting meeting and we all learned something.

We then discussed how we move forward with this group. I am standing down as convenor after 10 years so looking for someone take on this role. Members seemed happy to organise the different meetings but a U3A group cannot run without a convenor! We are meeting in January hopefully with a new convenor, to get a programme organised for 2025 or to completely change the way this group run. The group does not have to be run in the same way as I have done it - time for a change!

>> I have enjoyed the last ten years and have had some very good help.

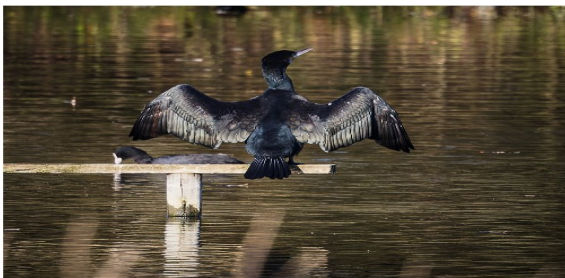
>> Mary Sadler

## **Bird Group Visit to Staveley Nature Reserve**

The grey blanket of anticyclonic gloom finally lifted in time for our visit to Minskip, just South of Boroughbridge off the A1. Staveley Nature reserve is managed by The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. The 84-hectare site consists of two shallow lagoons edged with reed swamp, fen and flower-rich grassland with scrub and pasture.

Exiting from the small carpark, visitors pass through an orchard onto a clearly marked path to Willow Wood. Long Tail Tits flittered through the tree line and a friendly Robin was easily spotted. Lots of “LBJ” s Little brown jobs populated the hedges and were somewhat hard to clearly identify but wren birdsong was very distinctive.

The East Lagoon provided us with our first glimpse of the Highland Cattle that were grazing on the Southern Pastures. The cows were wearing GPS trackers that look like cowbells but emit an audible warning when they approach the ‘virtual fence’. The warning gradually increases in pitch, and if the cow does not turn around, ultimately gives the animal a mild electric pulse equal to that from a standard electric fence. This Cattle conservation grazing creates vegetation at different heights, and small areas of bare ground without the need for expensive and intrusive fencing. This makes it suitable for a wide range of wildlife in different habitats. It allows wildflowers to grow, flower and set seed each year.



Images C Fieldgate

Our binoculars were soon trained on the water and afforded us a range of wildfowl: Tufted Duck, Swans and their cygnets, Moorhen, Widgeon, Golden Eye, and a female Teal whose identity provided lots of discussion. The ID photos in guidebooks can be misleading as often breeding plumage is shown. Luckily for our group, we have experts (Liz x2 and Richard) on hand to help novice birders like me. From in the hide, a more expansive panorama was seen along with some fine feathered Gadwall, who the group considered to be one of the smartest looking ducks with its black “stern” feathers.

The path to the Church Hide took us alongside some farmland, and as we made our way down the track we were treated to an entertaining aerial display by a trio of beautiful Red Kites, enjoying the delights of the thermals. As we crossed the River Tutt, we spied some more conservation livestock: this time some beautiful Belted Galloway and a small flock of Black Hebridean Sheep just being relocated to a nearby pasture. Lunch break was taken in the newest hide on site - a straw bale building lined with lime rendering topped off with a turf roof, overlooking the West Lagoon. Lapwing and a pair of Cormorants along with Shoveler ducks and Heron were added to our list. Retracing our steps, we were fortunate to see a Kestrel at close quarters as it, with its beautiful blush colouring glinting in the sunshine, ascended into the nearby treeline.

Around 330 plant species have been found here, including the stunning Bee Orchid and marsh Hellebore. A splendid common Buckthorn tree laden with black berries might be sign of harsher winter weather to come.

Everyone agreed it had been a most enjoyable warm autumnal morning. This is a great reserve is worth a visit and seemed popular with photographers, young families and nature lovers alike.

A big thank you to Gaynor for coordinating this year’s birding visits. Keep your eyes/binoculars peeled for a new calendar of visits for 2025. New members warmly welcomed.

## Litter Picking

Please could you put in a reminder for Litter Picking on Wednesday December 11th, meet at 2pm opposite the parish church.

Hi viz, pickers and bags provided. Please bring your own gloves. Ring 01969 622071 to say you are coming so that the right amount of equipment is ready.

Thank you

## Leyburn & District u3a Laptop and Technology Group (Tech Group)

Our final meeting of the year saw a much smaller attendance but sometimes that's an advantage as we can spend longer on something that's a little more time consuming.

### Emailing head scratcher

One member needed a steer to find out why in sending out an email to a group of people, three of the recipients resulted in a 'bounce back' - meaning the delivery of it failed. This can happen if a particular email provider server detects something 'it doesn't like' - often when an attachment is included which was the case with this email. It transpired that all of the three recipients had the same email provider. It's hard to say why some things happen, and this was definitely the case when the same email with the same attachments was sent to the three recipients individually rather than within the group, and each person received it.

### Downloading photos and attachments

A quite common thing we assist with is showing someone how to download photos and other attachments from an email, and once downloaded, to explain where to find them and if required how to print these off. It can be so frustrating getting so far, clicking something and then wondering where to find what you've just done.

### Time to reflect

As the year comes to a close it's nice to look back at the tech issues and problems we have been asked to help members with and to take satisfaction from having been of help. Across the year attendance as averaged out at 8 members each monthly meeting with the highest number at a session being twelve in both March and May. Overall we have had 79 members come through the door.

### The year ahead

We look forward now to see what 2025 brings! Hard to believe it's 39 years since we were being warned everything tech related would stop working as the clock struck midnight on New Year Eve 1999 and rolled over into 2000!!!! Happily the world kept spinning, computers didn't all crash and trains still arrived late or not at all!! If you have a tech issue, we'd love to see you. If you haven't got a tech problem, you are still welcome to pop along and have a cuppa and a chat - we're a friendly bunch of people.

### A bit of housekeeping



We have updated our mailing list to include only those members who have attended at least one meeting within a 12 month period. This is to help reduce the number of unwanted emails being received by those who no longer wish to attend. That said, if you have a tech issue or are new to Leyburn & District u3a and would like to come along to our next meeting in January, please get in touch and we will happily add you to the mailing list.

Help is at hand

The u3a Tech' Group aims to provide basic help and assistance in a safe, friendly and welcoming environment. The ethos of u3a is all about mutual learning and we look to give advice and information that helps the member to solve their own tech problem wherever possible, so that if a similar issue occurs again they know what to do. Nothing beats that satisfying feeling of having solved a problem yourself. Feel free to email either myself (John), Christine, Sue or Yvonne if you'd like to attend or to be added to the meeting reminder email list. Via convenor on the website!

We meet the third Monday of each month. The next meeting of the Tech Group is on Monday 20 th January 2025. Meetings take place 2pm - 4pm at Leyburn Arts & Community Centre. All we charge is £2 per member which helps cover room hire. Coffee and Tea are available for a small donation of just £1. Non u3a Members can attend up to two sessions before deciding whether to take up u3a membership so feel free to bring a friend.

And finally!

If you are coming to a session, please bring your device and any connecting lead or charger AND most importantly have available any password related to it or to your query. We look forward to welcoming you.

